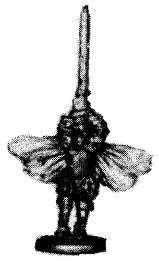
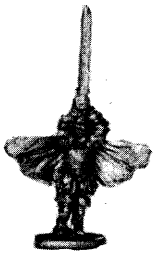

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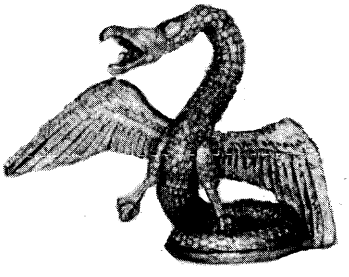


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Invisibility, Mirror Image *Same as Magic-Users Spells.*

See Other Planes Allows the Dragon to peer into any one plane that it wishes. While it is looking into another plane, the dragon is blind to its surroundings, but can sense by smell, touch and sound. Duration: 3 turns.

Wall of Gloom Creates an opaque wall of darkness with the same dimensions as a *wall of fire.* Passing through this will reduce morale by 2. All light sources, including magical ones, are extinguished when passing through this wall. Duration: 3-8 turns.

Wall of Wind Creates a wall with the same dimensions as a *wall of fire.* Arrows or quarrels passing through this wall will be blown away, as will man-sized or smaller flyers unless a saving throw is made. The wall is transparent unless placed over sand, smoke, etc. The wall will disperse gas. Duration: 3-8 turns.

Weave Barrier A seemingly solid barrier can be woven over any lattice with man-sized or smaller holes. As examples, thatch laid over a pit, a spider's web, etc. may be used as this lattice. The barrier can appear as anything the dragon desires, or can be blended into the landscape. If touched in disbelief, it is dispelled, but otherwise lasts until the light of a full moon falls upon it. An area roughly the size of the dragon may be covered.

Weight Control Any non-living object may be doubled or halved in weight by this conjuration. Range: 12". Duration: 3-8 turns.

Level 3

Binding Spell This spell freezes any object made of metal into one immobile piece. Magical items are allowed two saving throws. Anything from a flail to a coat of plates to a war machine will be affected by this spell. Duration: 1-4 turns.

Control Winds The caster of this spell may change the speed by ± 15 mph, and change the direction by 45°. Duration: 6 turns. Range: 24" radius.

Find Traps *As clerical spell.* Only traps dangerous to the dragon will be detected.

Hallucinatory Terrain *Same as Magic-Users spell.* However, water may not be made to appear as land, and *vice versa.*

Hold Mammal From 1-4 mammals (including men and all humanoids) can be held with this spell. A saving throw is allowed. Range: 12". Duration: 6 turns.

Mesh Similar to a Web, a Mesh created by this spell is roughly twice as strong, and non-inflammable. If used with the Weave Barrier spell, the barrier will last until the Mesh vanishes. Range: 3". Duration: 8 hours.

Negate Enchantment I Any magic item/device may be temporarily rendered useless by this spell. The item must be named, and only one item may be so negated per day. Duration: 2-12 melee rounds. Range: 6".

Protection from Normal Missiles *As Magic-Users Spell.* A dragon may elect to throw this spell on any combination of creatures that total less than the caster in hit points.

Revelation This spell acts to *Dispel Illusions,* and allows the user to "You will become irresistible to the opposite sex, but your first born child will murder you."

A curse may be lifted for 8 hours via a *bless* spell, and indefinite- anything else while using this spell. Range: 12". Roll after each melee round to see if spell has taken effect.

Sticks to Snakes *As clerical spell.*

Servant Summoning I A dragon has a 10% chance per age level of possessing a *summoning stone,* allowing the use of this spell. Only *EVIL* dragons will use this spell except in the greatest peril. From 4-16 of these creatures will appear for 2-12 melee rounds.

Description: These creatures appear as clumsy birds with wings too large for their body. They are jet black, armor class 5, and move 4"/48", with 2-12 hits each. They attack with 2 talons for 1-2 points each, as well as their beak for 1-6 points of damage. These creatures are driven off by strong light, and will not cross water under any circumstances.

Water to Wine A dragon *loves* good wine. This spell allows the dragon to convert any water (including salt or tainted) to wine valued even by Elves. Amount: 20 gallons per age class.

Wood to Sand 1 cubic foot of wood per age class of the caster may be permanently changed to sand. Living trees and Ents are allowed extra saving throws. Range: 12".

Level 4

Attack Other Planes When used in conjunction with a See Other Planes spell, this conjuration causes a dragon's breath and spell attacks to affect the plane the dragon is looking into. Range: as applicable by spell or breath attack. Duration: 2 turns.

Call Lightning *Same as Druid Spell.* The actual bolt is 10 8-sided dice. Frequency: 1 bolt/10 minutes.

Charm Monster *Same as Magic Users Spell.* Dragons will never use this spell upon each other.

Curse A dragon able to use this spell will typically curse its slayer as its dying act, or its subduer after escape. A dragon can curse any being within sight or memory. The curse will-always come true, but the time at which this will occur can not be specified. No saving throw is allowed the victim. Most curse are designed to first torment, and eventually kill the victim. A typical curse might be, "You will become irresistable to the opposite sex, but your first born child will murder you."

A curse may be lifted for 8 hours via a *bless* spell, and indefinately if combined with a *permanent* spell. One may *Wish (Limited* included) that the dragon would lift the curse, but this will work only if the dragon is still alive. Two *Full Wishes* will dispel the curse, as will saying the dragon's name. No other means will negate the curse.

Extention I *Same as Magic Users Spell.*

Haste *Same as Magic Users Spell,* except either an area or an individual can be affected.

Non-Detection *Same as Illusionists Spell.* This spell is *not* powerful enough to thwart a *Seek* spell (below), but will double the amount of inaccuracy inherent in that spell. Duration: 8 hours.

Polymorph Self A dragon must be very careful when using this spell, lest it lose its wisdom and name, and be forever trapped in the polymorphed form. If a dragon takes the same shape repeatedly or for long periods of time, there is a 2% chance, per day or fraction, cumulative, that it will be trapped. Silver, Gold, and the Platinum Dragon dragon are not subject to this danger.

Polymorph Others A similar danger exists in the use of this spell upon a dragon. Because of the greater change involved, the chance of entrapment increases to 5% per day or fraction, again cumulative.

Rock to Sand This spell will turn rock into fine sand, weakening and possibly destroying any object struck by it. 1 cubic foot of stone per age level of dragon may so be changed. Range: 12".

Seek Those dragons able to use this spell are among the most feared of all! It allows the dragon to find the direction (within ± 20°) and the distance (within 20%) of any object that the dragon has ever seen or can name. Nothing short of a *mind blank* or similarly powerful spell will interfere with the functioning of this spell. It may be used repeatedly on the same object to provide better accuracy.

Turn Magic Any pebble, coin, or small mineral object becomes a charm of *spell turning* via use of this spell. This charm works but once for one creature or object touching it. It acts as a ring of spell turning for this one use. Duration: Until Used, or 1 week maximum. Range: Physical Contact.

Work Weather A limited form of *Control Weather,* causing one or two of the following to occur at the caster's will:

1) Call any storm within sight to move in any direction at a speed of 30".
2) Cause gale force winds from any direction.
3) Turn aside foul weather from the dragon during flight.

Level 5

Animate Dead Similar to the Magic-Users Spell, but dragon skeletons or that of any mammal can be animated, as well as those of men. Such monsters will have 1/2 of the hit dice of the original creature, and will attack for 1/2 damage. A dragon can animate skeletons from 2-16 hit dice of creatures (1-8 hit dice of skeletons). Range: 6".

Conjure Elemental *Same as Magic Users Spell.* Elemental strength is 16 dice. Only an air or earth elemental may be summoned, although an air elemental will not turn on the dragon if control is lost.

cont. on pg 15

D&D Variant

PITS

By Merferger the 11&3/4 Lord of Mecic
Alias Richard Morenoff

These are a set of charts to help the dungeon master when player characters or monsters fall into a pit. I made these to use in Dungeons and Dragons but you can use them wherever you think. You can also change them to your liking. Before you use them, make sure you read the *notes* below.

1 PITS
01-60 = empty pit
61-95 = occupied pit
96-98 = teleporting pit
99-00 = bottomless pit

2 Occupied Pits
01-35 = spikes*
35-65 = animal/insect
66-70 = teleporting pit
71-90 = monster
91-00 = special

3 Animal/Insect
01-35 = snakes*
36-45 = lizards*
46-55 = giant tick
56-70 = giant serpent*
71-85 = giant weasels
86-00 = giant centipedes-always poisonous, no other damage

4 Monster
01-50 = a jelly, ooze, mold, or pudding etc.
51-00 = roll on D&D monster matrix

5 Special
01-40 = tied or chained down citizen
41-80 = tied or chained down specialist
81-00 = tied or chained down monster — if freed: 50% friend, 50% attack roll on monster matrix

6 Citizen
1 pipeweed grower
2 shipbuilder
3 hatmaker
4 beer merchant
5 sculptor
6 fisherman
7 locksmith
8 tool merchant
9 weapon merchant
10 teacher
11 loan shark
12 trapper

7 Specialist
01-15 = magic-user
16-50 = fighter
51-60 = cleric
61-70 = thief
71-75 = alchemist
76-80 = druid
81-85 = monk
86-90 = assassin
91-85 = ranger
96-00 = scribe

NOTES

1 Wherever there is an asterisk(*), there is a 40% chance that it is poisonous.

2 If there is a monster, it can have treasure. Some monsters (like the giant class types) might have a huge bowl of boiling water waiting for victims.

3 Pits can open wide at the bottom so it could be a monster's chamber, but *without* any other ways out!

4 Specials (TABLE 5) will usually be totally stripped of their valuables.

5 Under Table 5 (Special) 81-00 = monster; roll on monster matrix to determine it. Then roll a 6-sided die: 1 = enthusiastically grateful and will help rescuer for a 2-20 days 2) = same as #1 but won't show it until the people get him out of the pit. 3)&4) undecided about rescuers; if taken out of pit 1-4 = loyal, 5-6 = will run away; if no sigh of rescuers taking him out of pit, it will attack.

5 Won't show reaction until taken out; 1-4=attack, 5-6=run. 6)attack as soon as freed. On all of these, if it looks like rescuers won't take monster out it will attack. If they don't even untie it, it will remember their faces and if ever freed will hunt them down.

D&D Variant

RANDOM EVENTS TABLE FOR SETTLEMENTS AND/OR SETTLED AREAS

by N. Robin Crossby
Australia

Even though social animals, such as man, band together for mutual protection, they still suffer collectively from misfortune. Such events are, however, lessened both in frequency and impact.

This Random Events table should be used only as guide for the referee. Players may learn of the events perhaps months after they have been resolved, or not at all, or the events may occur right on their doorstep and force their involvement. An event such as a monster terrorizing an outlying village can offer an interesting opportunity for adventure. An invasion from the evil kingdom to the north may cause a player to emigrate or join the army.

When I use the table I roll once each month for every province/fief in each kingdom. It could, however, be used at either the village/town/city or kingdom/Empire level. It could even be used once per game week, although this could get a little bit "exciting".

There are of course several possibilities that will require referee discretion, such as border raids on a province surrounded by friendly provinces, or Political Oppression in an extremely lawful/good kingdom/province/city etc. . . . In such cases, referees should either translate the event into something similar but more likely, or simply re-roll.

Referees should roll at the beginning of each month (or at the beginning of each period they have decided on). Then, by cross-indexing the season with the Event/Percentile dice roll, an event (or no event) can be easily extracted.

I hope that this will bring more depth to your campaign, as it has to mine.

RANDOM EVENTS TABLE FOR SETTLEMENTS OR SETTLED AREAS

EVENT/S	SEASON SPRING	SUMMER	AUTUMN	WINTER
No unusual events	01-83	01-79	01-79	01-80
Heatwave/Drought	84	80-81	80	—
Snowstorms/Blizzards	—	—	81	81-85
Heavy Rains/Floods	85-86	82	82	86-87
Storms etc./Earthquakes etc.	87	83	83	88-89
Poor Harvest/Famine/Food Riots	—	—	84-85	—
Rich Harvest/Economic Disruption	—	—	86-87	—
Recession/Depression/Inflation/ Exploitation	88	84	88	90
Oppression/Inquisition/Witch hunts	89	85	89	91
Uprisings/Revolts/Riots/Coups	90	86	90	92
Assassination attempts(s)/Intrigue/ Change of Ruler etc.	91	87	91	93
Border Raids	92-94	88-90	92	9 4
Invasion/Crime wave/War	95-96	91-92	93	95
Plague/Epidemic	97	93-95	94-95	96
Terrorization (of outlying village by monster/s etc.)	98-99	96-98	96-98	97-98
More than one event	00	99-00	99-00	99-00



The Adventures of Monty Haul #2

MONTY AND THE GERMAN HIGH COMMAND

by James M. Ward

It was Tuesday night, our weekly "anything goes" night. We all went to Robert's house for the game. Monty was going to run it and was being very secretive as to what we were going to do. We filtered in one or two at a time until nine of us were there. The Tractics boys. Dave (I), Tim, and Brian were all clumped together talking about something called "Cham-bowi" armor (it sounded something like that) and I was just going over to see if I could incorporate it in my medieval campaign game when Monty started setting up the ping-pong table and Robert brought out the soda pop and food. Most everybody went over to help Monty, I went over to help Robert (which was my first tactical error of the night).

Monty had the Tractics boys and me (because my mouth was too full of food to protest) go into the other room with our written orders. When the three I was with read the WW II orders with us being the Germans, they were overjoyed. It seemed we were going to attack a bunch of snipers that were entrenched in a hilly area. That kind of game was their kind of thing, but it left me far from pleased. I never enjoyed playing any game using gunpowder (figuring it was too hard to duck a bullet or cannon ball), but I usually put up with it with as good a grace as I could manage. We were to be given an armored car, four halftracks, and two Kubelwagens. The list included enough men and materials to sink a pocket battleship. I ignored it and waited to be given what the others didn't want. They started setting up vast battle plans with three or four alternate plans if the enemy did this or that. Our attack plan was to be called "Goblin" and it was to be a lightning quick pincer movement of men and vehicles. I tried to point out that goblins didn't have pincers and maybe we should call it operation "Crabby" or maybe operation "Silverfish". They ignored me and finished writing out volumes of orders. We put Dave (I) in charge. Tim and Brian didn't like being blamed for things (especially things like losing the game for us) and Dave was from Chicago and was used to getting blamed for things. They gave me the armored car with the 20mm cannon and I was to guard the rear (they probably figured that I couldn't do much harm back there). Tim started tooling up the dirt road with his two half tracks while Dave started up the other side of the board with his two half tracks into a grove of woods. Brian drove up the middle a little behind both advance groups and I sat back in the woods setting up what they called a wide field of fire but what I called a good place to hide.

Then we saw the Orcs!

They came out in hordes from a group of rocks in the middle of the board. Monty had tricked us into thinking we were going to fight a WW II battle and while he didn't please the Tractics boys, I had a big grin on my face. I started roaring up the side of the board towards the Orcs wanting to tangle with the beasties, but that brought loud shouts from my teammates. They pointed out in typical German fashion that I had to obey orders and was to get back to where I belonged. I think that's where my mind switched from German to the common tongue. The Orcs were cut to ribbons by a cross fire from the half tracks and those that survived ran back into the rocks closely followed by Brian and his Kubelwagens. Brian's search revealed a secret tunnel. He was going to enter it and blast anything in his path, but Tim (acting like typical tricky SS storm trooper) suggested that it be booby trapped to explode when it was opened again. Dave and Brian thought that was a good idea and even I agreed (now thinking of it as a delayed blast fire ball). A fourteenth level EHP jumped up (it was Dave II) and threw an insect plague at us (he was used to sneaking up on things in a typical Petal Thrown fashion). The bugs were terrible and Monty rolled two of the German troopers dead from bites. I then suggested we toss a cloud kill on the bugs in the form of smoke bombs and that took care of the problem (they didn't thank me).

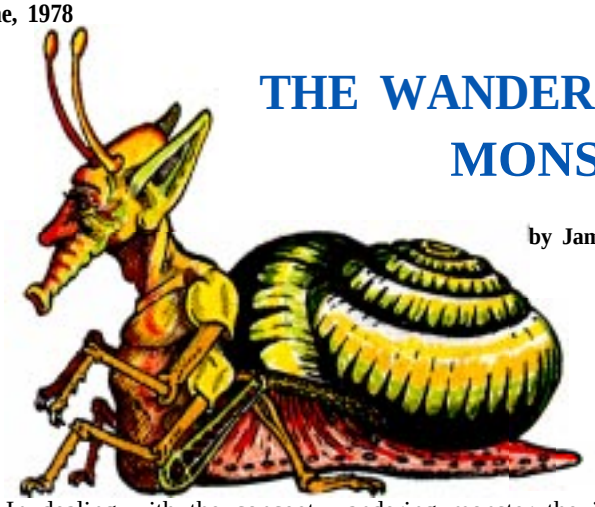
Tim and Brian started saying something about "bore sighting" the likely hiding places and the castle on the hill and our leader Dave was talking about something called hedge hopping towards the primary objective. I then realized that thinking in the common tongue had made me unable to understand the language they were speaking. I just sat back in the woods, waiting for more D&D goodies to come crawling out of the hills. I have a funny feeling that it was the mortar fire that Dave (I) was directing at the castle that caused the four storm giants to come running out tossing boulders. Tim and Dave both laughed saying that rocks couldn't hurt their armored half tracks (while I was backing my armor car behind some big trees). The first set of boulders crushed in the front of one of Tim's units and pushed over the unit of Dave's that had the mortar. Bullets (of all different calibers) didn't seem to do much to them. The bazooka took out one and Brian got two others with his panzerfaust, but the remaining giant ruined one of his Kubelwagens and its crew. Two hand grenades took care of the wounded giant and we (or I should say the Tractics boys) started moving towards the castle at maximum speed to make them a tougher target for rocks. So far we had seen Orcs from Tom, and Giants from Robert and I figured now that we were making it hot for the castle Ernie would be raising his tricky head as a magic user and sure enough he jumped from another pile of rocks as a warlock, after the German units had passed of course. His fireball took out the half track that Tim had repaired and three of the troopers escaped with their lives and a flame thrower. I opened up on the pile of rocks he had come out of with my 20mm cannon (that I was now calling my lightning bolt thrower) and caused Ernie to run towards our little surprise in the other pile of rocks. We were all rewarded by a very satisfying explosion (related to us by Monty) and Ernie was supposed bits and pieces over a bunch of rocks.

Mike then told us all that he was taking out his flight wing. It was a pack of Manticores, but Mike spoke of everything in WW I flight terms and we all put up with it. He had the monsters go over Brian's Kubelwagen in a strafing claw run and they ruined the thing. We then were able to get him into a triple crossfire and were able to ruin him a little too. Out of his ten uckies he was able to take one back into the castle walls. Mike was pleased with his kill ratio (numbers of any type impressed him) when Brian told him that kamikaze flyers didn't come around until WW II. That got a laugh out of the rest of us, but he didn't even grin.

Little did we know that when Dave (II's) heroes and Robert's superheroes were pelting us with arrows, Dave was raising Ernie for some more magical help. We lost some men to the arrows and they lost their heroes and superheroes to our return fire. We started mortaring the castle and a panzerfaust took out the front gate. With the gate gone, five Trolls rushed out at our Germans. Bullets and grenades didn't do much good because they regenerated too fast, it looked bad for us when Brian thought of the flame thrower and burning Trolls (I guess he had

cont. on pg 11

THE WANDERING MONSTER



by James Ward

Forum

In dealing with the concept wandering monster the judge is the first and last word. Also, because any given DM is very individualistic the manner in which those ever present monsters are handled varies from judge to judge. What the wargaming scene really needs is some consistency in the method DM's throw those creatures at us poor players.

First, it is logical to divide all the possible wandering monsters into two categories: the intelligent monsters (and thus aligned) and the unintelligent ones that are just out for the food potential of the player. The nonthinking monsters are easy to judge, they just attack and kill whenever they get the chance. There are only 39 of these out of a possible 95 deadly creatures running around every dungeon. The thinking ones are the beings that give everyone the most trouble.

When dealing with any given being of intelligence, the first thing a DM must do is roll for alignment, unless the being is an EHP type or a Paladin type. When the alignment is known, the actions of the wandering being are much easier to decide. When lawful it is supposed by the nature of the alignment that the wandering being will talk first and not rush into battle, or at least (as in the old tradition of the gun fighters) wait for you to make the first aggressive move. The neutral being can go either way, with the supposition that they always move in their own best interests. The last alignment is the one that everyone knows is going to get you if they get the chance!

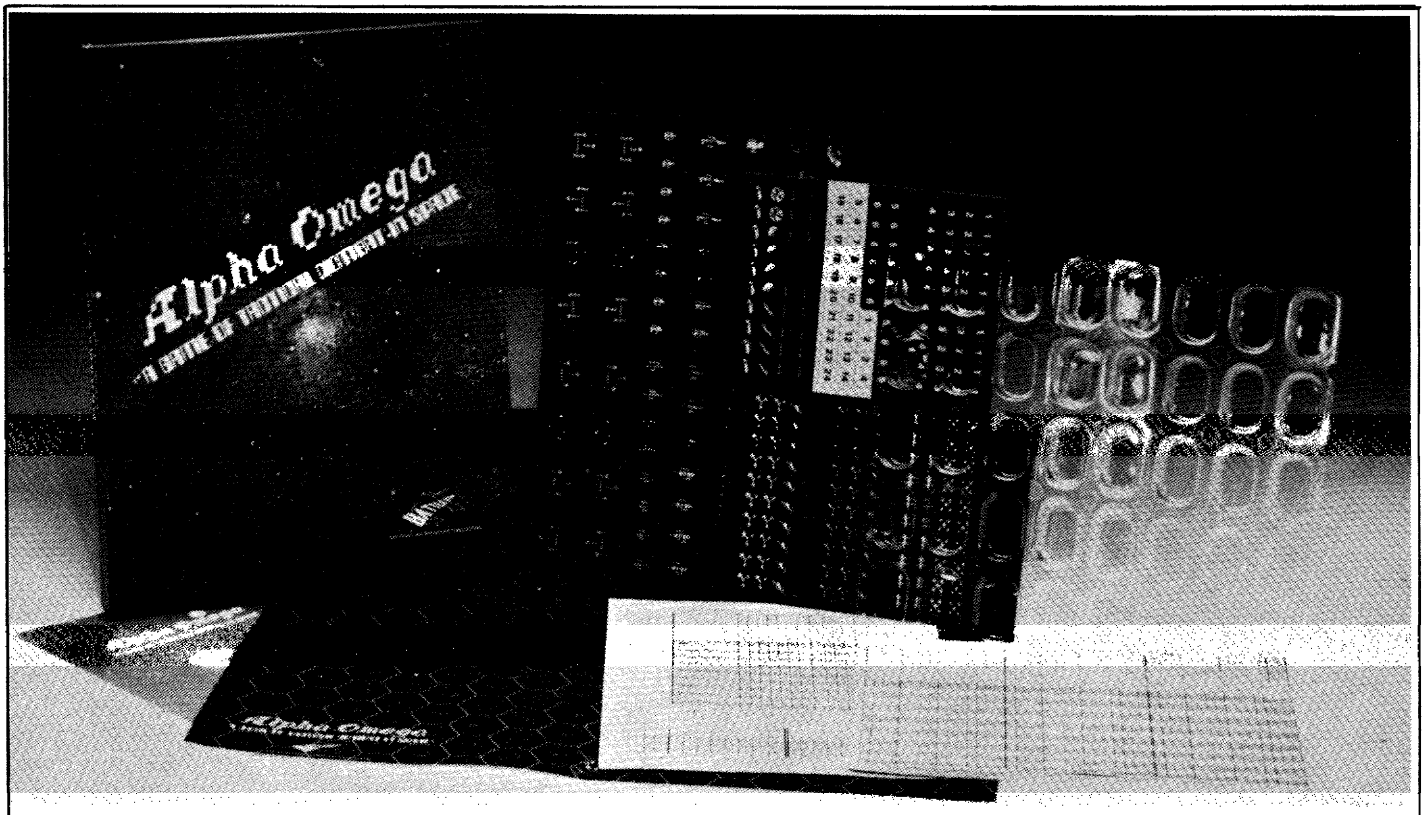
Logic and sound judgement must also enter into the wandering monsters actions. If the player is a wizard and he has a Balrog buddy walking with him those low level dwarves, theurgists, sharpers, and lycanthropes just are not going to take the terrible pair, (regardless of the duty of law to kill evil, or the hate dwarves have for those balrogs). There is also a very real chance that those giants and lords will ignore the low level player as well. Make sure, all you DM's out there, that the wandering being will have some chance against those players in your game. Why should those leather armored footpads take on the chainmailed fighters? The answer is that they wouldn't even think of it, (unless the judge makes them).

There are many methods a DM can use to make the use of wander. ing monsters simpler. Many judges when using magic users from the lists will roll for their spells and give them things like ventriliquism and light spells and a bunch of magic mouth spells. The judge now has a poor little magic user that doesn't stand a chance against an irritated hobbit! To alleviate this problem, the DM should make a list of all his possible wandering monster magic users and give them the most useful aggressive spells.

Now that you are making lists for the magic users you should carry the concept another step and do the same for all the wandering monsters. I would suggest prerolling for hit points, giving magic users and priests men at arms for support, listing and damaging abilities of each monster, the armor class of the being, and finally the weapons the being carries if any. The resulting list for the fourth level creatures could look like the following:

FOURTH LEVEL WANDERING MONSTERS

1. DOPPLEGANGERS: 1-2 of them appearing, sleep or charm spells have no affect, will change into any other creature instantly, does 1-12 points of damage in battle, takes 17 hit points, has an armor class of 5, moves 90 feet in a turn in the Dungeon, Chaotic.
2. WRAITHS: 1-4 of them appearing, sleep spells have no affect, silver arrows do ½ damage and magic arrows only do one die of damage, the wraith when it hits drains one energy level, it takes 9 hit points, has an armor class of 3, moves 120 feet in a turn in the Dungeon, Chaotic.
3. GARGOYLES: 1-2 of them appearing, requires a magic weapon to strike, 2 claws/do 1-4, bite/ does 1-6, horn/ does 1-10, takes 12 hit points, has an armor class of 5, moves 90 on ground/150 feet through the air in the Dungeon, Chaotic
4. OGRES: 1-4 of them appearing, they use swords, takes 22 hit points, has an armor class of 5 with a 50% chance that any given ogre has on chainmail, moves 90 feet in the Dungeon, Chaotic.
5. EVIL PRIEST CURATE AND 1-6 MEN AT ARMS: curate has 2 light wound spells and 2 hold person spells, the men and the priest are in chainmail and shield, the curate takes 20 hit points, the men take 5 points each, they move as men, all are chaotic, all use maces.
6. MYRMIDONS: 1-4 of them appearing, all are in chainmail and using swords, each takes 23 hit points, moves as men, roll for alignment.
7. ENCHANTER & 1-4 HEROS: enchanter has 2 sleep-2 charm person-2 web-l phantasmal force-l hold person-l haste-l wall of fire, the men are wearing leather and shield, the enchanter takes 10 hit points, the men at arms take 15 each, they move as men, roll for alignment.
8. PILFERERS: 1-4 of them appearing, all are in leather and have daggers only, each takes 17 hit points, move as men, there is a 60% chance to pickpockets/ a 50% chance to hide in shadows, can either be neutral or chaotic.
9. SHADOWS: 1-4 of them appearing, requires a magic weapon to strike, one touch loses 1 strength point for 8 full turns, not affected by sleep or charm person spells, takes 9 hit points, has an armor class of 7, moves 90 feet in a turn in the Dungeon, Chaotic.
10. GIANT BEETLES: 1-2 of them appearing, bites for 4 dice of damage, takes 15 hit points, has an armor class of 3, moves 60 feet a turn in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.
11. GIANT SCORPION: 1-4 of them appearing, bites for 3 dice of damage/sting is poisonous, takes 20 hit points, has an armor class of 3, moves 90 feet a turn in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.
12. LYCANTHROPE: roll a die to see which kind; 1-weretiger 2-werewolf 3-wereboar 4-werebear, all claws do 1-8/ all bites do 2-12, double that for the bear, has an armor class of 4, tiger takes 13 hit points, wolf takes 11, boar takes 21, bear takes 14 hit points, only silver or magic weapons affect them, bite gives lycanthrope sickness, moves different per beast, first three are neutral or chaotic, the bear is neutral or lawful.
13. CARNIVOROUS APES: 1-6 of them appearing, 2 claws/do 2-12, bite/does 3-18, each takes 22 hit points, has an armor class of 4, moves 90 feet a turn in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.
14. OWL BEAR: 1-4 of them appearing, 2 claws/do 1-6, bite/does 1-12, takes 15 hit points, has an armor class of 5, moves 120 feet a turn in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.
15. DISPLACER BEASTS: 2-6 of them appearing, 2 tenticles/do 2-24, can displace like the cloak, takes 22 hit points, has an armor class of 4, moves 150 feet a turn in the Dungeon, partially intelligent (chaotic).
16. BLINK DOGS: 4-16 of them appearing, bite/does 1-8, can use a limited teleport to move 60 feet, has 13 hit points, has an armor class of 5, moves 120 feet a turn in the Dungeon, partiall intelligent (lawful).
17. PHASE SPIDER: bite/1-6 and poison, can phase into ethereal form when not attacking, takes 24 hit points, has an armor class of 5, moves 150 feet in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.
18. GIANT TICK: 3-12 of them appearing, bite/does 1-4 plus it drains your blood and weakens you, takes 8 hit points, has an armor class of 4, moves 30 feet a turn in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.
19. WILL O' WISP: 2-12 electrical bolt, can become blinding or vanish, has 33 hit points, an armor class of -8, moves 180 feet a turn in the Dungeon, Chaotic.
20. RUST MONSTER: rusts metal on a touch, can sense iron in 100 yards from any direction with the wind going the wrong way, takes 19 hit points, has an armor class of 2, moves 120 feet a turn in the Dungeon, nonintelligent.



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Notes From Another Barely Successful D&D Player

by Jeff Swycaffer

James Ward, in The Dragon II/7, presents many fine suggestions and tricks for a D&D adventurer. I admired them all, and was motivated to present a few that I have used.

It seems to be a law of nature that stage magic is more impressive than true sorcery, and that the "con" is more effective than valid argument. Thus, as a D&D player of three years, my favored character type is the *"Maladroit."* Simply put, I fight poorly, use no magic, cannot pick locks, and never lead men. I do, instead, spend more than half of my time on the road with stage productions, mime troops, and patent medicine shows learning crowd control and con artistry, and my DM takes this into account when calculating probabilities. I am not without defenses, however.

I keep a dart gun with NON-poisonous darts. The darts are, however, crusted with tarry tree sap. I have more than once traded an "antidote" for my freedom, then run like the devil.

I keep a hollow tube full of charcoal, which, when blown in a cloud into a burning fire produces a micro-fireball which can distract some people, momentarily blind others, and frighten an occasional monster.

In "The Swords of Lankhmar" by Fritz Leiber, The Gray Mouser, thief extraordinaire, has a razor sharp coin sewn into the lining of his jacket. I find this to be a clever idea, although I have never had the opportunity to use it.

I have used, however, the length of pliable yet strong wire I keep in my trouser leg. Once as a trip wire (it failed) and once as a strangle wire (one dead orc, two badly cut hands; I now have small wooden handles attached.)

How does one apply oil to mummies? I use a wine sack with a very small nozzle, and squeeze it for a fifteen foot stream, but this cannot be the most efficient method. If this becomes a regular column (It couldn't hurt) *[Don't count on it. ED.]* somebody should suggest something.

A sling can be used as a club (for one blow, then the rock falls out,) or as a whip with one of the worn handles striking the foe. Once I actually fought a Kobold with my belt, hitting him with the buckle. (I lost.)

My search for a good clue continues.

Smuggling drugs into a city fallen from its previous grandeur into sleazy decadence, especially if illegal, can deliver quite a lot of cash per haul, and that type of city has the most easily bribed watchmen. (I get my stardrops from a wizard in the mountains.)

Finally, our group uses the SPI *War in Europe* maps for campaigning, with World War II borders and countries (altered slightly,) since for us the terrain in an unexplored hex is not as important as the hex's inhabitants. For us France is an empire with England and Spain as provinces, while Italy and Sicily are broken into four countries and two. Ruins, castles, caverns, haunted houses, and Brigands' camps abound.

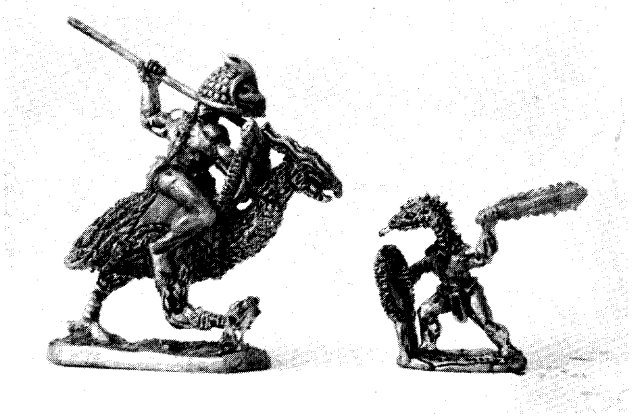
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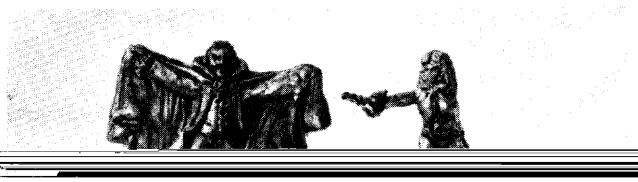
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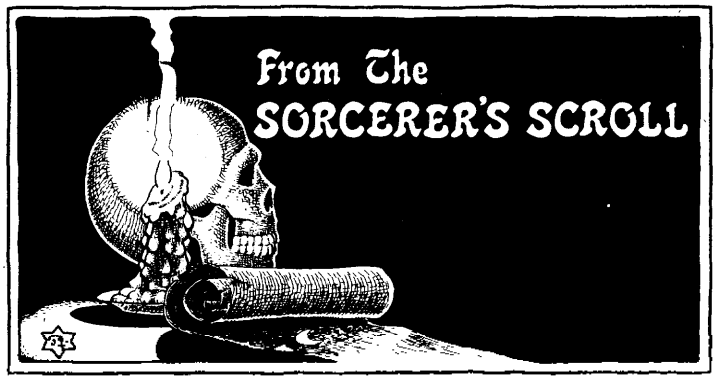
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D&D GROUND AND SPELL AREA SCALE

by Gary Gygax

The differences between the indoor ground scale, 1" = 10 feet, and the outdoor measure of distance, 1" = 10 yards causes considerable confusion and misunderstanding amongst DMs and players alike. This ambiguity will be fully taken care of in *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS,* but it is also worth discussion here for the benefit of those readers who do not obtain the new game, as well as to examine the root cause of the problem. Here is how it all came about.

Under cover date of 1 July 1970, I published the last issue of the Castle & Crusades Society (an affiliate of the *International Federation of Wargaming)* newsletter, *DOMESDAY BOOK (#5). Therein was printed the "Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association Medieval Miniatures Rules — the progenitor of CHAINMAIL.* These rules had a ground scale of 1" = 10 yards. About this same time, I began having the LGTSA play a rough set of fantasy rules which were eventually included as *CHAINMAIL's* "Fantasy Supplement". The medieval rules contained a brief mention that mines were possible only when a campaign (long-term, map and paper game with table top battle resolution) was being conducted. However, when *CHAINMAIL* appeared in 1971, its section on sieges contained a paragraph telling readers to conduct tunneling and counter-digging operations on paper, with a neutral third party acting as judge. When Dave Arneson took this concept into the "dungeons" of his Castle & Crusade Society medieval campaign castle, *Blackmoor,* he used a one-third smaller ground scale. This change was quite logical, and it was retained when I wrote *D&D.*

Ground scale and figure scale seldom agree due to the area of available playing surface. At 25mm (1") to 6', a stout English longbow would have a range of about 105"! Note that is actual distance on the playing surface. Heavy crossbows and siege machinery (catapults) are worse still. Upping the scale to 1" = 10' doesn't help all that much, for we still have an effective longbow range of over five actual feet. Now, all miniatures rules also deal with a *time* scale, and this must be such as to allow for maneuver, movement, and combat over the playing surface. While a high movement rate is possible if the time scale is relatively long, this disallows any formation changing or maneuvering.

There are, therefore, three scales to deal with, figure scale, ground scale, and time scale.

A ground scale consideration is most important, for playing area is the most limiting factor. A 1" = 10 yards scale gives a sufficiently large scale area for conducting typical medieval battles if a 5' X 10' table top or floor area is available.

A time scale of 1 game turn equalling 1 scale minute allows for historic movement, fire, and combat.

Figure scaling is the least important. The size of the casting dictates what scale is used: if 54 mm, 40 mm, or 30 mm size figures are used, the *actual* surface that a figure occupies dictates that a 1:20 scale ratio be used, i.e. about 1" x 1" of table top is taken up by the casting of a foot soldier, and this is 10 x 10 scale yards. 25 mm figures fall just a bit short, and if a 1:20 scale is to be used, figures should be base mounted at 1" per foot figure, 1½" x 3" for horse. 15 mm figures are perfect for a scale of 1: 10.

As there are considerable distortions in existence on the table top (consider a 25mm figure being 30' tall if measured by ground scale), some very strange things heppen when the ignorant or deceitful player attempts to use the *D&D* outdoor scale for magic range and area of effect without considering ground and figure scale. Len Lakofka was kind enough to point out to me what happens if the yards of effect of a spell are converted to feet in a game where a 1:1 ratio is used, *viz.* 1" equals 6 scale feet. A huge area can be covered with *webs* from a lowly magic-user's second level spell. Of course this is ridiculous, as the 1" = 10 yards scale only applies in cases where all other scales are in proportion. Imagine the movement rate of figures — a heavily armored man-at-arms would travel 30" per round, light cavalry 120"! If one scale is tampered with, all of the others must be adjusted accordingly in order to retain a reasonable, balanced, and playable game. Let us go back to the origination of *D&D* again and discuss the concepts used therein in relation to *CHAINMAIL.*

CHAINMAIL, being a set of medieval miniatures rules, was carefully grounded on historical evidence. It attempted to provide the groundwork for simulations of historical battles using -miniature figurines. The "Fantasy Supplement" was an outgrowth of the medieval rules and the "Man-to-Man Combat" (1 figure to 1 actual combatant) section I also devised for conducting battles of several different campaigns I ran for the LGTSA. All of the fantastic people and monsters were discussed in terms of *CHAINMAIL.* Spell ranges and areas of effect were scaled to *CHAINMAIL.* Saving throws were devised to match the combat abilities of creatures, which were in turn meshed with the troop types normally included in *CHAINMAIL.* As *D&D* grew from *CHAINMAIL,* it too used the same scale assumptions as its basis. Changes had to be made, however, in order to meet the 1:1 figure ratio and the underground setting. Movement was adjusted to a period ten times longer than a *CHAINMAIL* turn of 1 minute, as exploring and mapping in an underground dungeon is slow work. Combat, however, stayed at the *CHAINMAIL* norm and was renamed a *melee round* or simply *round.* As the object of the game was to provide a continuing campaign where players created and developed game *personae,* the chance for death (of either character or monster) was reduced from that in *CHAINMAIL,* so that players could withdraw their characters from unfavorable combat situations. Missile ranges were reduced by one-third (from scale yards to scale feet because of the confined area of play and the conditions prevailing, *viz.* low ceilings, darkness, narrow passages, etc. The range and area of effect of each magic spell was adjusted accordingly, for the 1:1 ratio had to be considered, as did the conditions of the area of activity and the ranges of normal missile weapons. (Remember that *D&D* was developed as a *game,* and allowances for balance between character roles and character versus monster confrontations were made.)

For about two years *D&D* was played without benefit of any visual aids by the majority of enthusiasts. They held literally that it was a paper and pencil game, and if some particular situation arose which demanded more than verbalization, they would draw or place dice as tokens in order to picture the conditions. In 1976 a movement began among *D&Ders* to portray characters with actual miniature figurines. Miniature figure manufacturers began. to provide more and more models aimed at the *D&D* market — characters, monsters, weapons, dungeon furnishings, etc. Availability sparked interest, and the obvious benefits of using figures became apparent: Distances could be pinned down, opponents were obvious, and a certain extra excitement was generated by use of painted castings of what players "saw". Because of the return of miniatures to *D&D,* the game is tending to come full circle; back to table top battles not unlike those which were first fought with *D&D's* parent, *CHAINMAIL's* "Fantasy Supplement", now occurring quite regularly. Unfortunately, the majority of *D&D* enthusiasts did not grow up playing military miniatures, so even the most obvious precepts of table top play are arcane to them. Distorting the area of effect of a spell seems to be an excellent idea to players with magic-user characters, and many referees do not know how to handle these individuals when they wave the rule book under their nose and prate that scale outdoors is 1" equals 10" yards.

More unfortunately, the blame for the possible ignorance of player and Dungeon Master alike rests squarely on my shoulders. It would have been a small matter to explain to everyone that the *outdoor scale must be used for range only, never for area of effect, unless a figure ratio of 1:20, or 1:10, is used, and constructions (siege equipment, buildings, castles, etc.) are scaled to figures rather than to ground*

cont. over leaf

D&D Variant

WEATHER IN THE WILDERNESS

By David Tillery

The two fighters huddled against the cliff face, their breath steamy in the cold air. They were numb from cold and in a foul mood. The snow had been falling for six days, and on the second day their aides had told them where to stick their helms, and left. Now, half dead from cold, they heard a sound from behind. Turning toward the sound, they saw two bulky shapes coming out of the murk. Screaming in terror and cursing an entire Parthenon of gods, they drew their swords and staggered out to attack. It was a very short battle; the two invaders had just come from a warm lair, and soon the white snow was stained red with the fighters' blood.

If the above story was your idea of a good wilderness adventure, then the following tables are for you. They are for the fiendish referee; the one who not only likes to keep the players busy with monsters, but uses strange terrain, and irate gods to bother the hapless players. The tables keep the game from being played in a park-like atmosphere. The tables can add realism to a game that has evolved into a "roll for wandering monsters, and see if we're lost" game (after all what good are 10 +2 daggers when the temperature is 20 below, and the character has no coat).

First, roll a six sided die; this is either the number of days or number of weeks (your choice) the following weather pattern will occur. Next, select the terrain that the characters are in, and roll an eight sided die; this will determine what type of weather you will be having. If you prefer to have realistic weather (no four week snowstorms in the desert) then use discretion with the results. If you don't like the result, then roll again for another weather pattern.

While shelter prevents many of the following weather situations to occur, they can open the door for other problems. If the weather would act upon the shelter and its inhabitants, then let it take its toll.

Terrain

Die Roll	Clear	Woods	River	Swamp	Mountains	Desert	City
1	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear
2	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear
3	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear	Clear
4	Unusual	Clear	Clear	Clear	Unusual	Clear	Clear
5	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Unusual	Cloudy
6	Cloudy	Cloudy	Cloudy	Unusual	Cloudy	Stormy	Stormy
7	Stormy	Stormy	Stormy	Stormy	Stormy	Winds	Unusual
8	Winds	Stormy	Stormy	Stormy	Stormy	Winds	Unusual

Weather Type

Die Roll	Clear	Cloudy	Stormy	Winds	Unusual
1	Cold	Dense Fog	Snow	High	Cold/Snow
2	Cool	Light Fog	Heavy Rain	Medium	Dense Fog/Heavy Rain
3	Cool	Low Clouds	Medium Rain	High	Light Fog/ Warm
4	Cool	Medium Clouds	Light Rain	Medium	Medium Rain/Cold
5	Fair	High Clouds	Thunderstorm	Light	Thunderstorm
6	Fair	Stormy	Cloudy	Light	Thunderstorm
7	Warm	High Clouds	Light Rain	Medium	Cold/High Wind
8	Warm	Low Clouds	Medium Rain	Light	Light Rain/Cool
9	Warm	Light Fog	Heavy Rain	Medium	Thunderstorm
10	Hot	Dense Fog	Snow	High	Hot/High Winds

In ***BLACKMOOR*** weather related diseases were covered lightly, the following diseases are the only ones concerned with these tables.

Disease	Chance of Immunity	Dur. Days	Days Inc.	Chance of Communic.	Recovery Weeks	% Fatal
Pneumonia	%5	10-100	1-6	10%	6	20%
Heat Stroke	—	1-2	1	—	1	7%*
Hypothermia	%5	1	0	—	2	15%**
Irritation	%2	2-20	1-4	—	1	1%
Flu	%10	2-20	1-8	20%	2	15%
Cold	%15	1-10	2	25%	1	2%

*The victim must rest or fatality increases to 25%.
**Fatality is 75% unless the victim is warmed, and rested.

Seasonal Weather

As a suggestion for the referee who wishes to plan an entire season's weather, that spans many types of terrain (thus making an excellent campaign addition), the following table should help:

Winter Season:	Spring Season:	Summer Season:	Fall Season:
(Weather lasts 1-4 weeks)	(Weatherlasts 1-2 weeks)	(Weather lasts 1-6 weeks)	(Weather lasts 1-2 weeks)
Clear : Use 1-4	Clear: Use 2-9	Clear: Use 5-10	Clear: Use 1-10
Cloudy: Use 1-10	Cloudy: Use 1-10	Cloudy: Use 1-10	Cloudy: Use 1-10
Stormy: Use 1-10	Stormy: Use 2-9	Stormy: Use 2-9	Stormy: Use 1-10
Winds: Use 1-10	Winds: Use 1-10	Winds: Use 1-10	Winds: Use 1-10
Unusual: 1,2,4-9	Unusual: 2,3,5,6,8,9	Unusual: 2,3,5,6,9,10	Unusual: 1-10

Weather Descriptions

Cold: The temperature is below freezing. The party must wear warm clothing or, there is a 15% chance of Hypothermia. If the party does not stay warm (clothing, shelter, fires, etc.) then for every week in the cold there is a 10% chance of contracting pneumonia, 15% chance of getting the Flu, and a 50% chance of catching a cold. If they stay warm, the chances are 2%, 5%, and 25% respectively. If the party travels in this weather, then there is a 25% chance per week of 1-6 points of frostbite. Any combat in this weather is at -1, and all moral is also at -1. Any reptiles (Dragons, Lizard Men, etc.) cannot move at all in this weather as it is too cold.

Cool: The temperature is above freezing, but below 60º. The chances for catching a cold in this weather is 20% for every three weeks exposed to it. The Chance for the Flu is only 2% for the same period of time. If the party has shunned warm clothing, then these are checked every week at 25% and 10% respectively. As it is still cold for a reptile, they move at ½ speed.

Fair: A beautiful day. There are no checks for diseases, and any party has moral of +2, and fights with a +1. Reptiles move normally.

Warm: The temperature is between 70 and 90 degrees. Check for irritation every week; unless no method of protection is being used against it (baby powder, talc, baths, etc.), then it is checked every 4 days. Both of these checks are made at 10% chance of contraction. As the weather is still nice, any party's moral is at +1. However if plate armor is worn in this weather, the wearer will have a movement penalty of ¼ (he moves at ¾ speed).

Hot: Above 90 degrees. Check for irritation daily at 15% chance of catching. The party must be checked for heat exhaustion every day, at 15% chance of succumbing to it. Double the party's consumption of water; but, if they are conserving the water then double the chance of heat exhaustion. Reptiles become overheated in this weather, and they move at ½ speed. As it is oppressively hot, moral and combat are both at -2, and combat cannot last beyond 15 melee turns.

Dense Fog: Thick ground fog, with a visability of only 30 feet. Due to the spooky conditions, the hirelings' moral is at -1. Flying is totally impossible; and all movement is halved. Surprise affects the party thusly: On a roll of 1-3 they surprise the enemy, and on a 4-6 the enemy surprises them. Missile weapons are ineffective in fog, and fire at -3.

Sorceror's Scroll *fr pg 13*

scale! If ground scale is changed, movement distances must be adjusted. If time scales are changed, both movement and missile fire/spell casting must be altered. Furthermore, if 30 mm or 25 mm figures and scale buildings and terrain are not used, then the area of effect must be adjusted proportionately. I ask your collective pardon for this neglect, and I trust that the foregoing will now make the matter clear. There are distortions of scales in *D&D* and *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* as well. Despite distortions, each meshes with the other to make the game an enjoyable one.

Light Fog: The visibility is only 180 feet. The penalties are the same as those in Dense Fog, except that surprise returns to normal odds.

Low Clouds: No penalties, except that there cannot be any long-distance flying in this weather. The visibility is about 2 miles.

High Clouds: No penalties, and the visibility is over 20 miles.

Medium Clouds: No penalties, except that there cannot be any long distance *high altitude* flying. The visibility is 6 miles.

Thunderstorm: In this dangerous weather there is a 2% chance daily of being hit by lightning. If the party removes it armor, then the chances are reduced to 1% daily. If the party is massively exposed (open land, or mountaintop) then the above odds are doubled. Lightning strikes cause from 10-100 points of damage, and will stun a victim for 2 days. The weather is a mixture of Low Clouds, and Medium Rain (add up their effects on the party (remember that everything is cummulative).

Snow: A Cold situation along with a light fog situation (add them up). The following adjustments are made to the final results: Increase the chances of a disease by 5%, and increase the damage that frostbite does, to 1-12 points of damage.

Heavy Rain: There is a movement penalty of ½ of the total movement ability; unless the subject is wearing plate armor, then the subject moves at ¼ speed. In this weather there is %5 chance of catching the Flu, and a 15% chance of getting a Cold. The party's morale is at -2.

Medium Rain: There is a movement penalty of ¼, unless the subject is wearing plate armor, then the penalty is ½. There is a 10% chance of catching a cold in the rain, and a 1% chance of getting the flu. Morale is at -1.

Light Rain: There is no movement penalty, except for wearers of plate armor, who have a penalty of ¼. There is no morale change, and only 5% chance of contracting a cold.

High Wind: This exactly like the Heavy Rain situation, except that there is no chance of catching the Flu. If the party is in the Desert, then there is a 25% chance they are in a Sandstorm, in which there is a 15% chance of suffocation.

Medium Wind: This like the Medium Rain situation, except that there is no chance of catching the flu.

Light Wind: No penalties, but gives excellent sailing weather.

Unusual Weather: On the combinations involved (Cold/Snow, Dense Fog/Heavy Rain, Light Fog/Warm, Medium Rain/Cold, Cold/High Wind, Light Rain/Cool, Hot/High Winds) simply add up the weather effects for the two types of weather and apply the result (remember that everything is cumulative). For example: A Cold/Snow situation gives the following results — 35% chance of Hypothermia, 35% chance of the Flu, 25% chance of Penumonia, 100% chance of getting a Cold, Frostbite damage is at 55% chance of getting it with 2-18 points of damage/attack, Morale is at -2, Combat is at -2, visibility is 180 feet, and missile fire is at -3. If this seems extreme, remember that a Cold situation is below freezing, and a Snow condition is also below freezing; so the temperature in this situation is somewhere in the area of 25 degrees *below* zero.

cont. from pg. 2

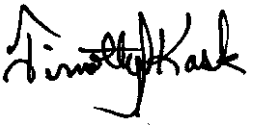
ing. It will be better than in the past. *ORIGINS* is in Michigan, which makes it considerably closer this year, and less of a chore in simply getting there. While I will be busy again this year, what with working on the massive (at least 250 will be able to enter) D&D tourney and running a *FIGHT IN THE SKIES* game one day, I find myself looking forward to it, strangely enough.

I'm really anticipating *GenCon* this year. First, we have even better facilities this year than last: an air conditioned campus in a beautiful setting, in Kenosha, WI. This is only about 35 miles from Lake Geneva, and offers far better facilities and convenience than any previous site of any major convention. We have been assured of better motel availability than Lake Geneva can offer, and they have an excellent cafeteria on campus, with really reasonable prices.

GenCon will also have a massive *D&D* tourney (probably even bigger than *ORIGINS')* as well as BIG MONEY *DUNGEON!* tourney, in addition to all of the regular games and tourneys. If you are interested in judging and/or running a tourney, please direct your attention to the small box elsewhere in this issue pertaining to this subject. Judges get in free . . .

The other major spring project, in addition to the cons, is the STRATEGIST CLUB AWARDS for "Creativity in Wargaming". Even as I write this, I am awaiting the last nomination ballots. This year, the nominating procedure has been considerably altered. The SC Nominating Committee is composed of the Life Subbers and about fifty other people within the industry. Virtually every significant company in the business is represented on the Committee. I feel that our Nomination Committee is the closest thing to a committee of experts one may achieve, which certainly goes some distance in lending credibility to the procedure. The ballots will be run in *TD, LW, F&M, MOVES, CAMPAIGN, The Space Gamer* and *The Judge's Guild's* newsletter. This wide dissemination of ballots will make this award that more prestigious and meaningful.

Things are looking up for printing a "Best of" edition of all the best material from the first volume of TD(#'s 1-6, all out of print), and SR(all but two of them are out of print — those two will be gone before June). We hope to have it available for GenCon. See you at the cons. Support our hobby by attending one of the "big 3": GenCon (the nation's oldest), PennCon(formerly PhilCon — "the" event this year in the East) or ORIGINS, the hobby's traveling roadshow.



Timothy J Kask
Editor

Dragon Magic *fr pg 4*

Extend Breath Allows the dragon to either make an additional breath of any type normally available to it, or expend the equivalent of 3 breaths in a single breath of double effect and size. If the Queen of the Chaotic Dragons uses this spell, as she is fond of doing, she may only use it upon one of her heads.

Improved Sticks to Snakes From 2-16 3 hit die snakes are created by this spell. All are poisonous, and can spit their venom twice for 3-18 points of damage with a 6" range. These snakes can only be hit by magic weaponry. Duration: 1 day maximum.

Negate Enchantment II As the third level spell, except with permanent effects.

Precognition As the psionic ability found in humans. The caster has an 80, 60, or 50 percent chance respectively to make an accurate low, medium, or high difficulty prediction.

Programmed Illusion *Same as Illusionists Spell.* The illusion will continue to perform as instructed for 6 turns after concentration is lost.

Servant Summoning II Similar to the third level spell, except 4-32 creatures will appear and serve for a period of 24 hours or less. Possession of a *summoning stone* is necessary. Only *EVIL* dragons will use this spell, except in the greatest peril.

Sunwall The creation of a wall so bright as to blind the viewer for 5-20 turns, unless a saving throw vs. magic is made. No heat is generated from the wall, but those attempting to pass through it must save vs. poison or are permanently and violently insane. Dimensions and Duration: As a wall of fire.

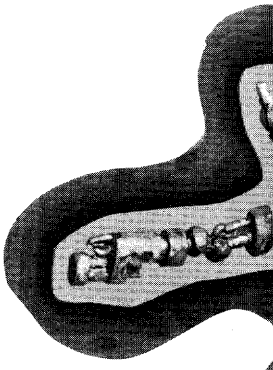
Time Reversal The spell cannot be cast on any person or creature, living or dead. The *object* struck by this spell will revert back to the state it was at when the dragon was born. For example, a suit of mail might revert back to iron ore, or a ruined artifact made to work again. Items in the possession of another intelligent creature are allowed saving throws. Range: 3". Duration: Until Dispelled.

Higher Level Magic

With rare exception, only gold and the platinum dragons can use spells higher than 5th level. Little is known of these spells, except that they are often more powerful versions of the above spells. In addition, some (50%) of red and bronze dragons, and all silver and gold dragons will also be aware of "human" magic spells and may employ these spells as well. The Chromatic and Platinum Dragons may select from either list at will. The dragon spells have seldom been written on scrolls. They will be found only in dragon lairs, and then only 10% of the time.


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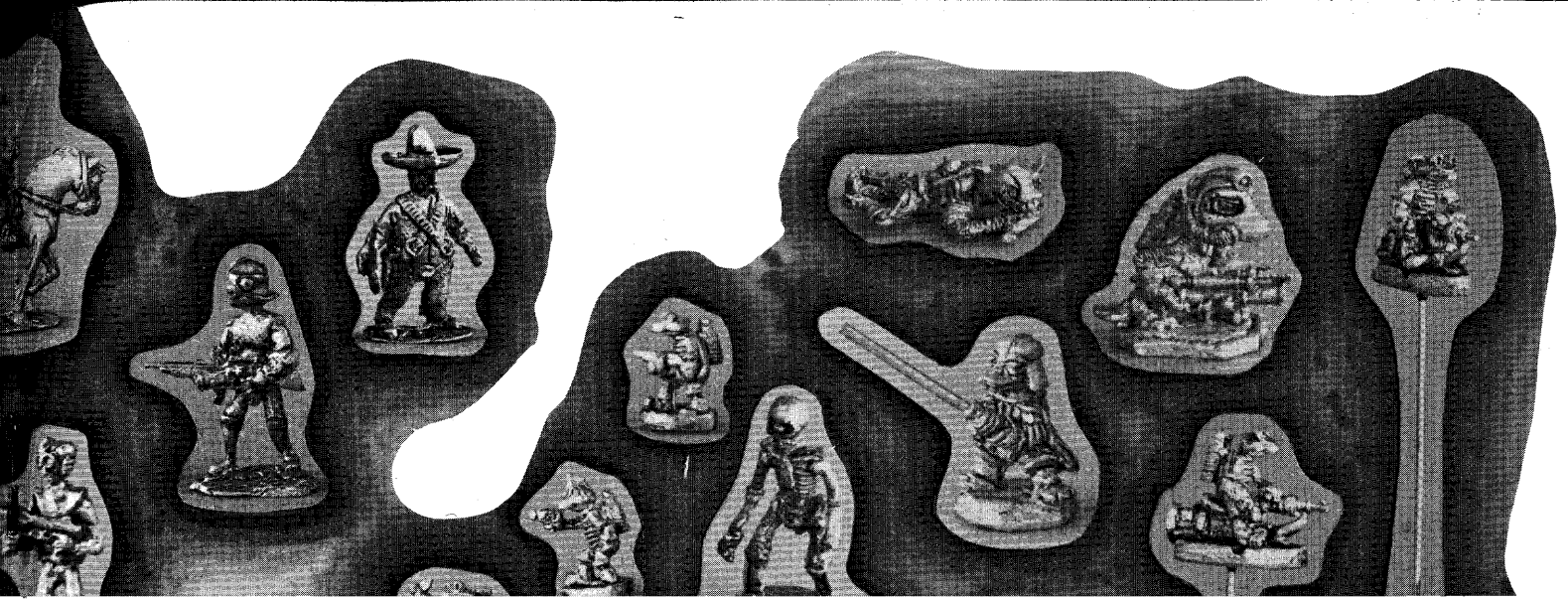



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STELLAR CONQUEST: EXAMINING MOVEMENT TACTICS

By Edward C. Cooper

Effective synchronization of the ship movement systems in *Stellar Conquest* may possibly be the most intellectually demanding, exuberant, and disquieting phase of player decision to be found in any wargame.

Ship movement in SC is actually the implementation of a player's technological level, since movement strategies are directly linked with the current level of technology. Two fundamentals, quick Reaction Time and adequate Star "Coverage" must be accomplished each turn by considering, and by deductive predicting, how another player will react to stimuli caused by your own ships' movements.

Players of SC will never have enough ships or concentrated firepower to protect all their holdings at the same time. The natural progression of the game forces a player to expand at a rate the society's technology never quite catches up to. Efficiency of movement thus becomes of extreme importance as the game lengthens and conflict become inevitable. It is therefore of key concern that a player's forces are kept moving, shifting positions, avoiding detection. In this manner, a ruler now has the ability and *potential* firepower to meet any sudden thrust head on, often deflecting it viciously back into the owner's heart. Effective ship movement is a life or death situation: always make sure of a back up plan in any major operation and leave your options OPEN. More than once, this simple procedure will save a throne.

Avoiding detection and achieving high mobility will be gone into with more detail later. First it is instructive to consider the three main rules governing ship mobility *without* additional technological achievements: movement factor, communications, and ship range.

Also known as the Basic Ship Attributes, these rules purposely limit a players mobility at gamestart. This stimulation of the common "buildup-expand" theory, though common, is a logical necessity. It forces players to expand slowly, as they would if the game were reality and they were living their respective parts. It also attempts to compensate for the known position of all ship counters (which is not realistic considering the basic technological level the game is started with) by not letting players go steam-shoveling off to attack the nearest player immediately. And immediate attack is tempting, since at the beginning of the game it is very easy to tell which counters are warships and those that are not.

An example perhaps best illustrates the position. YOU have just entered the unknown galactic cluster with a small portion of your home empire's civilization. Objective: growth and exploitation of the cluster's favorable living conditions and mineral wealth. No living ruler — correction, *SANE* living ruler is going to send all his warships light years away from a chosen home planet before he has those forces — and meager they are — scour the entire known volume of space around the planet chosen as home for signs of life, signs of possible enemies and possible friends. Relating the game to reality, you would not be able to "see" there were three other races entering the cluster at approximately the same time. Every world would have to be considered hostile until your forces had explored them and proven otherwise. With only 35 million people, perhaps one fifth fully qualified for the task — not to mention the big task of colonizing the home planet, this would take a *long* time. The close density of stars only makes the situation worse. A probable course of action would be to sit tight "quietly" for a number of years until such a time as the colony was well established with trained personnel and resources that could be sacrificed in such an undertaking.

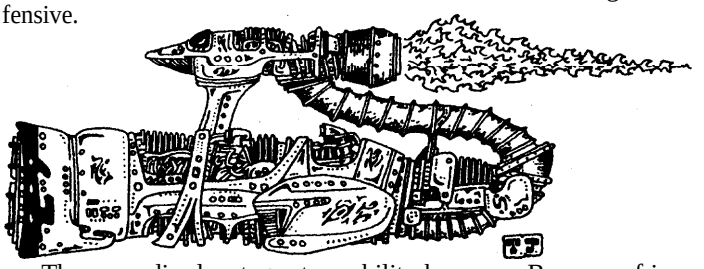
The Basic Ship Attributes place severe restrictions on the players at gamestart. Yet, at the same time they look so inconspicuous. For, looked at through another light, they are a beginning: a small, feeble, beginning that challenges a player's creative ability and imagination to shape them into something better. Meanwhile they go relatively unnoticed until they are no longer applicable.

The effect on the ship movement systems is noticeable. Every player starts the game in absolute equality. The diversity needed to create the "cultures in conflict" theme actually arises from the diversity of the players themselves and how they best see fit to handle the goals of their society as it moves to take on the stars. In SC, what happens is exactly what you do, even when considering the drawing of star cards. (Everyone has the same chance to pick UP a TR planet but because of probabilities not everyone does). The Strategy? Success in one system improves your chance in another. Work to get an advantage in one of the technical sequences. Don't waste IU's by investing thinly in all three.

Ship Mobility is the first of the ship movement systems available to players through research and development. Unlike its counterparts, Ship Communications and Ship Range, Ship Movement is a research sequence devoted entirely to advances in speed and maneuverability. Increases in Ship Range and Ship Communications rely more on what a player does on the strategic level.

Mobility is more of a tactical device, and perhaps the key factor in determining the outcome of many battle series. As a player does not have the forces to protect all holdings, as was mentioned earlier, "WAR" in *Stellar Conquest* usually consists of many series of running battles darting from system to system as players try to outmaneuver each other and also bring other forces to bear. The advantages of high mobility in reducing reaction time for a defense posture and strengthening surprise in an offensive mode can now be seen.

Until Unlimited Ship Communications is researched, if ever, since players do not usually have the resources to research a relatively peaceful device such as USC and still prepare to defend themselves against possible aggression, players having the highest mobility can out maneuver most opponents with hit-and-run tactics, crippling the victim's economy. This player must use new expenditures to replace losses and remain defensible. He never does have the chance to gain the offensive.



There are disadvantages to mobility however. Because of investment requirements to obtain a high movement factor, a player possessing high mobility will probably not have numerical superiority, An attack in force, even if slow in coming could likely mean defeat. The player must press the offensive as a defensive measure. The trick in SC is to keep your opponents off balance while not provoking all out war. For the aggressive minded player, mobility is a definite plus.

Ship Communication is the first strategic level factor influencing the ship movement systems. It limits a player's direction of ships to when they occupy or pass through a star hex. For the beginning level, eight hexes or one light year typifies a realistic estimate of limited range function and supply, with ships found operating beyond this limit automatically being destroyed.

The importance of ship communication as a weapon of war must not be underestimated. Veteran players often take advantage of the less experienced here. When the time to attack has come, the old pro waits until his opponent has most of his forces in route to star systems — then strikes quickly, deep into enemy territory hoping to secure the objective before the player has time to react. The less experienced player may have more firepower (they usually do) but it is neutralized most effectively. The ships in transit must continue on to their assigned destinations before they can recieve a message ordering them back.

Beginning players always seem to head for destinations that take two or three turns transit time. Don't do it! Picture it yourself: fleets expanding outward, spreading forces thinly, conquering in the name of the glorious empire; then a sudden concentrated thrust inward from an unknown enemy. That player has a three turn movement advantage on

you at the least. Should the foe arrive at your home planet before the next production year — and that's a good possibility if the attack was planned right, good luck in trying to figure a way out of occupation. The effect is not so unlike the result you would achieve if you shot an apple with a high powered rifle . . . Applesauce.

Mass invasion is a constant threat at any time in the game. The defense against it is simply one of ordered planning. To achieve the quick reaction time and secrecy mentioned earlier, *rotate* your forces, so that at least *three fourths* of your *warships* reach their destinations in the same turn they are moved: starhopping if you will. If you believe this is too conservative, I can assure you it isn't. Most of any military force is used up in patrolling and maintaining a constant readiness position.

You still have the remaining quarter of warships to explore hostile frontiers or throw in support of your advanced scouts. 25% can be a high figure after the 3rd or 4th production year. What have you accomplished by this? An orderly, but steady advance, a first line of defenses around your outer stars — backed by a core of solid support from the inner worlds, as well as the insurance that you will beat an opponent to the intended target if an aggressive move is made.

Take a look at quadrant number one for instance. Scorpii is colonized as the home planet. With a movement factor of 4MA, requiring only 15IU's investment, it is possible to rotate forces from Procyon to Kruger, Kruger to Aurigae, and Aurigae to Procyon in synchronized order so that every turn warships would occupy each of those stars. This patrolling method seals off the frontier and keeps player #2 from finding out what any of those stars contain in the way of planets. Player #2 will never know what those stars contain unless he wishes to lose a SCT or risk an ESC and a possible war in either case.



Second, #2 will always be in doubt as to the exact composition of forces maintained in those star systems. Simply, part or all of your forces can be moved from each start on to the next with a ship or two staying behind to form a new combination with arriving ships. Every turn this combination can be made different, so that secrecy gives the added strength a player may or may not lack in ships.

This rotation forces an attacking player to send a force deep into your home territory instead of making an indirect attack preceding the main one. An "indirect" attack is usually made against an unoccupied star hex of value in an effort to test the defender's ship patterns and get that player to commit ships to the newly occupied stars' destination in order to take it back.

At this point, the *attacker* has a choice depending on the evaluation of your ship movements, whether to *press* the attack or discontinue it, retreating instead.

For the attacker to have such a choice can only mean trouble to the defender.

However with your buffer stars "covered", this safety valve approach is cut off and this indirect attack against an unoccupied hex cannot be made. Should an attack be made against the *occupied* buffer star, the attackers size and strength has been given away and you have not been forced to divert shipping without a knowledge of the enemy.

Should the attacker continue inward, such knowledge of his force composition gives you the opportunity to prepare the traditional "warm welcome" so often spoke of in hospitality circles.

When you are reasonably certain an invasion has come, the Rotation Strategy also opens up a new dimension in Reaction.

Since your warships stationed at Procyon, Kruger and Aurigae can all reach the other in one turn, you have the ability to wait one turn to determine the intended target of the attack, and still head it off in time. We will assume Scorpii itself is the likely target because the opponent does not want to give his composition away.

The forces on Procyon and Kruger would head homeward (to Scorpii) leaving only a small token force behind to garrison the star while its fleet is away. This small force could be reinforced in one turn by the other forces that were left behind as garrison on Kruger and Aurigae. The reason to leave a garrison at all is because #2 may have a small strike force travelling with the main invasion group which would turn aside at the last minute to attempt a harassment attack in an attempt to get you to divide forces.

The forces that were on Aurigae would attack as far as possible *into* the invading players' territory doing as much damage as possible in a blitzkrieg maneuver. This force would form the second prong of an attack in conjunction with any lone SCTS or ESC happening to be on the frontier at that time.

Should the fleet from Arigae give the enemy problems, it is the foe's ships that have a long way to travel to get back home. Such a threat might also inspire the opponent to a half hearted attack and quick retreat from Scorpii. Many times a movement of this sort will abort what could have been a successful assault on your home planet. If luck is with you and you are successful in wiping out the advanced base the invasion was launched from, you've stopped the invasion cold.

Obviously, the Rotation Strategy can be employed in any close clustering of stars.

While a player should not diminish the importance of Ship Movement and Ship Communication in the Movement Triad, Ship Range is the vital link in the chain. It drastically affects a players ability to expand the society's culture, as well as future economic and strategic military considerations. A player should be careful to guard against "enclosure" by fellow players. While at the same time it is undesirable to expand too rapidly, expanding too slowly can be just as harmful.

No matter how advanced one particular society is over another, if that society's main colony does not control a proportionate number of satellite colonies on habitable TR worlds, what good is the attainment of a yet higher level of technology?

It is of no use. Range is restricted. Communications never reach full potential. Stagnation.

If you ever become unsure about the proper "pace" of expansion, gauge your growth with that of the other players. This does not give you the advantage of reaching the galactic core first, but it also doesn't place you at a disadvantage by misinterpreting the movement patterns of your antagonists.

What would happen to a player with a very small range of operations as compared to an adversary with a large one? Ultimately, the player with the larger domain would bring him under attack. With advanced bases, and unlimited range for all practical purposes, the larger player could pick his target at will.

The incursion may or may not be successful. What is important is that the smaller player does not have the ability to counterattack. His ships cannot reach far enough into the larger domain because of range limitations. He does not have the ability to threaten an attack on his quardrant with a massive counterstroke. He has no deterrent.

Stellar Conquest is not won by overpowering and totally eliminating another players forces. The expense of losses obtained while trying to accomplish this minor miracle in light years of space is staggering. A



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player's economy would never recover. The kingdom would fall easy prey before the forces of those remaining.

Stellar Conquest is won by eliminating the other players' advance bases!

Most veteran players have found a way to sidestep the eight hex range rule (5.1.2) by playing CT LEAPFROG. In starting the game, 33 or 34 of the 35 available CTs are sent to colonize the Homeworld, while one or two lone CTs head out to a planet eight hexes away from the main colony. This doubles that players' effective range. When appropriate, this "seedling" colonization program is continued. Perhaps this is taking advantage of the rules, but the rules make no mention of numbers in specifying colonized planets. They just say a planet must be inhabited. A player sacrifices some population increase, but feels the added range worth it. It *is* certainly cheaper than paying 70IU for Unlimited Ship Range.

The idea behind this type of expansion policy is sound. But in the idea's execution, even veteran players make a mistake. Actually, two mistakes are made; one big — the other bigger.

Pertaining to the first, players do not seem to realize those 1IU colonies are as important, if not *more* important than the Homeworld. Secondly, not understanding the mistake, the player then neglects to guard it as it should be guarded: IN FORCE!

If a player believes the loss of a seedling colony means the loss of only one IU, better think again. The adversary who has captured this outpost can now use it to increase his own sphere of influence.

Many players also use these outpost colonies to *extend* the range of their warships, correct? If such a colony should fall to the enemy . . . WHAT HAPPENS TO ALL THOSE SHIPS WHO NOW FIND THEMSELVES BEYOND THE EIGHT HEX RANGE LIMIT???

They no longer have a friendly colony within eight hexes, are subject to rule 5.1.2 . . . AND ARE DESTROYED! Perhaps a player has not lost only 1IU after all.

The ship movement systems in *Stellar Conquest* offer unlimited strategies. There are many aspects of the game like the one above not directly dealt with in the rules. Perhaps there is a purpose in this???

When you get to know this game, or think you do, you suddenly find how much more there is to know. Mastery of the Ship Movement Triad is a step in the right direction.

Ed. Note: SC will be re-released in a box by Metagaming soon. Watch TD for dates.



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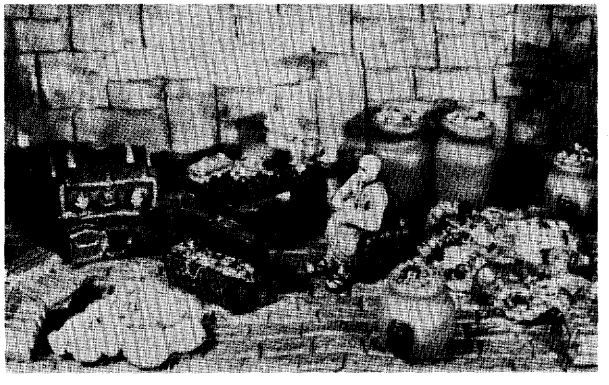
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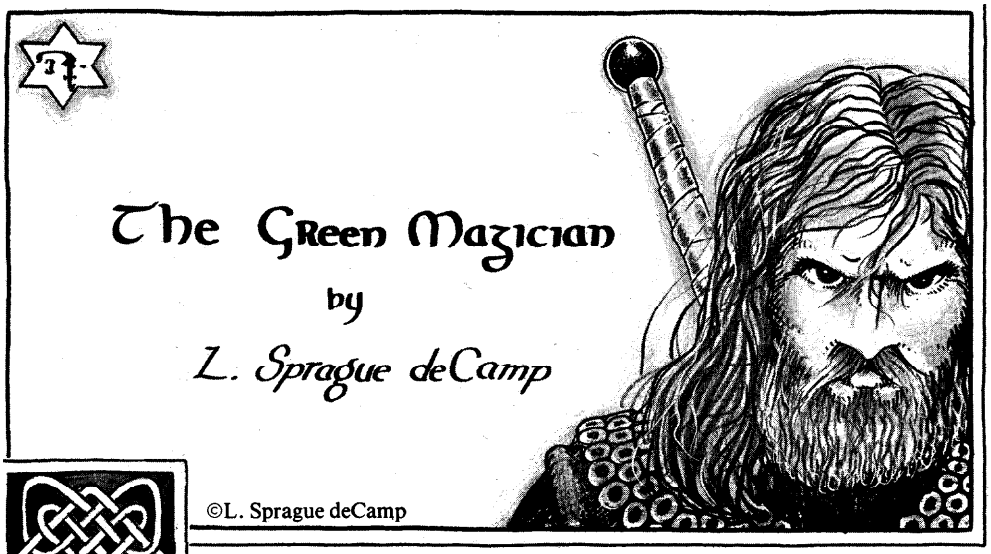
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In that suspended moment when the gray mists began to whirl around them, Harold Shea realized that, although the pattern was perfectly clear, the details often didn't work out right.

It was all very well to realize that, as Doc Chalmers once said, "The world we live in is composed of impressions received through the senses, and if the senses can be attuned to receive a different series of impressions, we should infallibly find ourselves living in another of the infinite number of possible worlds." It was a scientific and personal triumph to have proved that, by the use of the sorites of symbolic logic, the gap to one of those possible worlds could be bridged.

The trouble was what happened after you got there. It amounted to living by one's wits; for, once the jump across space-time had been made, and you were in the new environment, the conditions of the surroundings had to be accepted completely. It was no good trying to fire a revolver or scratch a match or light a flashlight in the world of Norse myth; these things did not form part of the surrounding mental pattern, and remained obstinately inert masses of useless material. On the other hand, magic . . .

The mist thickened and whirled. Shea felt the pull of Belphebe's hand, clutching his desperately as though something were trying to pull her in the other direction.

Another jerk at Shea's hand reminded him that they might not even wind up in the same place, given that their various mental backgrounds would spread the influence of the generalized spells across different space-time patterns. "Hold on!" he cried, and clutched Belphebe's hand tighter still.

Shea felt earth under his feet and something hitting him on the head. He realized that he was standing in pouring rain, coming down vertically and with such intensity that he could not see more than a few yards in any direction. His first glance was toward Belphebe; she swung herself into his arms and they kissed damply.

"At least," she said, disengaging herself a little, "you are with me, my most dear lord, and so there's nought to fear."

They looked around, water running off their noses and chins. Shea's heavy woolen shirt was already so soaked that it stuck to his skin, and Belphebe's neat hair was taking on a drowned-rat appearance. She pointed and cried, "There's one!"

Shea peered toward a lumpish dark mass that had a shape vaguely resembling Pete Brodsky.

"Shea?" came a call, and without waiting for a reply the lump started toward them. As it did so, the downpour lessened and the light brightened.

"Curse it, Shea!" said Brodsky, as he approached. "What kind of a box is this? If I couldn't work my own racket better, I'd turn myself in for mopery. Where the hell are we?"

"Ohio, I hope," said Shea. "And look, shamus, we're better off than we were, ain't we? I'm sorry about this rain, but I didn't order it."

"All I got to say is you better be right," said Brodsky gloomily. "You can get it all for putting the snatch on an officer, and I ain't sure I can square the rap even now. Where's the other guy?"

Shea looked around. "Walter may be here, but it looks as though he didn't come through to the same place. And if you ask me, the question is not where we are but when we are. It wouldn't do us much good to be back in Ohio in 700 A.D., which is about the time we left. If this rain would only let up . . ."



With surprising abruptness the rain did, walking away in a wall of small but intense downpours. Spots and bars of sky appeared among the clouds wafted along by a brisk steady current of air that penetrated Shea's wet shirt chillingly, and the sun shot an occasional beam through the clouds to touch up the landscape.

It was a good landscape. Shea and his companions were standing in deep grass, on one of the higher spots of an extent of rolling ground. This stretch in turn appeared to be the top of a plateau, falling away to the right. Mossy boulders shouldered up through the grass, which here and there gave way to patches of purple-flowered heather, while daisies nodded in the steady breeze. Here and there was a single tree, but down in the valley beyond their plateau the low land was covered with what appeared at this distance to be birch and oak. In the distance, as they turned to contemplate the scene, rose the heads of far blue mountains.

The cloud-cover thinned rapidly and broke some more. The air had cleared enough so they could now see two other little storms sweeping across the middle distance, trailing their veils of rain. As the patches of sunlight whisked past, the landscape blazed with a singularly vivid green, quite unlike that of Ohio.

Brodsky was the first to speak. "If this is Ohio, I'm a peterman," he said. "Listen, Shea, do I got to tell you again you ain't got much time? If those yaps from the D.A.'s office get started on this, you might just as well hit yourself on the head and save them the trouble. He's coming up for election this fall and needs a nice fat case. And there's the F.B.I. Rover boys — they just love snatch cases, and you can't put no fix in with them that will stick. So you better get me back before people start asking questions."

Shea said, rather desparately, "Pete, I'm doing all I can. Honest. I haven't the least idea where we are, or in what period. Until I do, I don't dare try sending us anywhere else. We've already picked up a rather high charge of magical static coming here, and any spell I used without knowing what kind of magic they use around here is apt to make us simply disappear or end up in Hell — you know, real red hell with flames all around, like in a fundamentalist church."

"Okay," said Brodsky. "You got the office. Me, I don't think you got more than a week to get us back at the outside."

Belphebe pointed, "Marry, are those not sheep?"

Shea shaded his eyes. "Right you are, darling," he said. The objects looked like a collection of lice on a piece of green baize, but he trusted his wife's phenomenal eyesight.

"Sheep," said Brodsky. One could almost hear the gears grind in his brain as he looked around. "Sheep." A beatific expression spread over his face. "Shea, you must of done it! Three, two, and out we're in Ireland — and if it is, you can hit me on the head if I ever want to go back."

Shea followed his eyes. "It does rather look like it," he said. "But when . . ."

Something went past with a rush of displaced air. It struck a nearby boulder with a terrific crash and burst into fragments that whizzed about like pieces of an artillery shall.

"Duck!" shouted Shea, throwing himself flat and dragging Belphebe down with him.

Brodsky went into a crouch, lips drawn tight over his teeth, looking around with quick, jerky motions for the source of the missile. Nothing more happened. After a minute, Shea and Belphebe got up and went over to examine a twenty-pound hunk of sandy conglomerate.

Shea said, "Somebody is chucking hundred-pound boulders around. This may be Ireland, but I hope it isn't the time of Finn McCool or Strongbow."

"Cripes," said Brodsky, "and me without my heater. And you a shiv man with no shiv."

It occurred to Shea that at whatever period they had hit this place, he was in a singularly weaponless state. He climbed on the boulder against which the missile had destroyed itself and looked in all directions. There was no sign of life except the distant, tiny sheep — not even a shepherd or a sheep-dog.

He slid down and sat on a ledge of the boulder and considered, the stone feeling hard against his wet back. "Sweetheart," he said, addressing Belphebe, "it seems to me that whenever we are, the first thing

we have to do is find people and get oriented. You're the guide. Which direction's the most likely?"

The girl shrugged. "My woodcraft is nought without trees," she said, "but if you put it so, I'd seek a valley, for people ever live by watercourses."

"Good idea," said Shea. "Let's . . ."

Whizz!

Another boulder flew through the air, but not in their direction. It struck the turf a hundred yards away, bounced clumsily, and rolled out of sight over the hill. Still — no one was visible.

Brodsky emitted a growl, but Belphebe laughed. "we are encouraged to begone," she said. "Come, my lord, let us do no less.

At that moment another sound made itself audible. It was that of a team of horses and a vehicle whose wheels were in violent need of lubrication. With a drumming of hooves, a jingle of harness, and a squealing of wheels, a chariot rattled up the slope and into view. It was drawn by two huge horses, one gray and one black. The chariot itself was built more on the lines of a sulky than those of the open-backed Graeco-Roman chariot, with a seat big enough for two or three persons across the back, and the sides cut low in front to allow for entrance. The vehicle was ornamented with nail-heads and other trim in gold, and a pair of scythe-blades jutted from the hubs.

The driver was a tall, thin freckled man, with red hair trailing from under his golden fillet down over his shoulders. He wore a green kilt and over that a deerskin cloak with arm-holes at elbow length.

The chariot sped straight toward Shea and his companions, who dodged away from the scythes round the edge of the boulder. At the last minute the charioteer reined to a walk and shouted, "Be off with you if you would keep the heads on your shoulders!"

"Why?" asked Shea.

"Because himself has a rage on. It is tearing up trees and casting boulders he is, and a bad hour it will be for anyone who meets him the day."

"Who is himself?" said Shea, almost at the same time as Brodsky said, "Who the hell are you?"

The charioteer pulled up with an expression of astonishment on his face. "I am Laeg mac Riangabra, and who would himself be but Ulster's hound, the glory of Ireland, Cuchulainn the mighty? He is after killing his only son and has worked himself into a rage. *Ara!* It is runing the countryside he is, and the sight of you Fomorians would make him the wilder."

The charioteer cracked his whip, and the horses raced off over the hill, the flying clods dappling the sky. In the direction from which he had come, a good-sized sapling with dangling roots rose against the horizon and fell back.

"Come on!" said Shea, grabbing Belphebe's hand and starting down the slope after the chariot.

"Hey!" said Brodsky, tagging after them. "Come on back and pal up with this ghee. He's the number one hero of Ireland."

Another rock bounced on the sward and from the distance a kind of howling was audible.

"I've heard of him," said Shea, "and if you want to, we can drop in on him later, but I think that right now is a poor time for calls. He isn't in a pally mood."

Belphebe said, "You name him hero, and yet you say he has slain his own son. How can this be?"

Brodsky said, "It was a bum rap. This Cuchulainn got his girlfriend Aoife pregnant way back when and then gave her the air, see? So she's sore at him, see? So when the kid grows up, she sends him to Cuchulainn under a geas . . ."

"A moment," said Belphebe. "What would this geas be?"

"A taboo," said Shea.

Brodsky said, "It's a hell of a lot more than that. You got one these geasa on you and you can't do the thing it's against even if it was to save you from the hot seat. So like I was saying this young ghee, his name is Conla, but he has this geas on him not to tell his name or that of his father to anyone. So when Aoife sends him to Cuchulainn, the big shot challenges the kid and then knocks him off. It ain't good."

"A tale to mourn, indeed," said Belphebe. "How are you so wise in these matters, Master Pete? Are you of this race?"

"I only wisht I was," said Brodsky fervently. "It would do me a lot of good on the force. But I ain't, so I dope it this way, see? I'll study this Irish stuff till I know more about it than anybody. And then I got innarested, see?"

They were well down the slope now, the grass dragging at their feet, approaching the impassive sheep.

Belphebe said, "I trust we shall come soon to where there are people. My bones protest I have not dined."

"Listen," said Brodsky, "This is Ireland, the best country in the world. If you want to feed your face, just knock off one of them sheep. It's on the house. They run the pitch that way."

"We have neither knife nor fire," said Belphebe.

"I think we can make out on the fire deal with the metal we have on us and a piece of flint," said Shea. "And if we have a sheep killed and a fire going, I'll bet it won't be long before somebody shows up with a knife to share our supper. Anyway, it's worth a try."

He walked over to a big tree and picked up a length of dead branch that lay near the base. By standing on it and heaving, he broke it somewhat raggedly in half, handing one end to Brodsky. The resulting cudgels did not look especially efficient, but they could be made to do.

"Now," said Shea, "if we hide behind that boulder, Belphebe can circle around and drive the flock toward us."

"Would you be stealing our sheep now, darlings?" said a deep male voice.

Shea look around. Out of nowhere, a group of men had appeared, standing on the slope above them. There were five of them, in kilts or trews, with mantles of deerskin or wolfhide fastened around their necks. One of them carried a brassbound club, one a clumsy-looking sword, and the other three, spears.

Before Shea could say anything, the one with the club said, "The heads of the men will look fine in the hall, now. But I will have the woman first."

"Run!" cried Shea, and took his own advice. The five ran after them.

Belphebe, being unencumbered, soon took the lead. Shea clung to his club, hating to have nothing to hit back with if he were run down. A glance backward showed that Brodsky had either dropped his or thrown it at the pursuers without effect.

"Shea!" yelled the detective. "Go on — they got me!"

They had not, as a matter of fact, but it was clear they soon would. Shea paused, turned, snatched up a stone about the size of a baseball, and threw it past Brodsky's head at the pursuers. The spearman-target ducked, and they came on, spreading out in a crescent to surround their prey.

"I — can't — run no more," panted Brodsky. "Go on."

"Like hell," said Shea. "We can't go back without you. Let's both take the guy with the club."

The stones arched through the air simultaneously. The clubman ducked, but not far enough; one missile caught his leather cap and sent him sprawling to the grass.

The others whooped and closed in with the evident intention of skewering and carving, when a terrific racket made everyone pause on tiptoe. Down the slope came the chariot that had passed Shea and his group before. The tall, red-haired charioteer was standing in the front, yelling something like "Ulluullu" while balancing in the back was a smaller, rather dark man.

The chariot bounded and slewed toward them. Before Shea could take in the whole action, one of the hub-head scythes caught a spearman, shearing off both legs neatly, just below the knee. The man fell, shrieking, and at the same instant the small man drew back his arm and threw a javelin right through the body of another.

"It is himself!" cried one of them, and the survivors turned to run.

The small dark fellow spoke to the charioteer, who pulled up his horses. Cuchulainn leaped down from the vehicle, took a sling from his belt and whirled it around his head. The stone struck one of the men in the back of the neck, and down he went. As the man fell, Cuchulainn wound up a second time. Shea thought this one would miss for sure, as the man was now a hundred yards away and going farther fast. But the missile hit him in the head, and he pitched on his face.

"Get out the head bag and fetch me the trophies, dear," said Cuchulainn.

II

Laeg rummaged in the rear of the chariot and produced a large bag and a heavy sword, with which he went calmly to work. Belphebe had turned back, as the rescuer came toward the three. Shea saw a smallish man with curly black hair, not older than himself; heavy black eyebrows and only a faint fuzz on his cheeks to compare with the heavy beards of the defunct five. He was not only an extremely handsome man; there was also a powerful play of musculature under his loose outer garment. The hero's face bore an expression of settled and brooding melancholy, and he was dressed in a long-sleeved white cloak embroidered with gold thread, over a red tunic.

"Thanks a lot," said Shea. "You just saved our lives, in case you wondered. How did you happen along?"

"'Twas Laeg came to me with a tale of three strangers, who might be Fomorians by the look to them, and they were like to be set on by the Lagenians. Now I will be fighting any man in Ireland that gives me the time, but unless you are a hero it is not good to fight at five to two, and it is time that these pigs of Lagenians learned their manners. So now it is time for you to be telling me who you are and where you come from and whither bound. If you are indeed Fomorians, the better for you — King Conchobar is friends with them this year, or I might be making you by the head shorter."

Shea searched his mind for details of the culture-pattern of the men of Cuchulainn's Ireland. A slip at the beginning might result in their heads being added to the collection bumping each other in Laeg's bag like so many cantaloupes. Brodsky beat him to the punch.

"Jeepers!" he said, in a tone which carried its own message. "Imagine holding heavy with a zinger like you! I'm Pete Brodsky — give a toss to my friends here, Harold Shea and his wife Belphebe." He stuck out his hand.

"We do not come from Fomoria, but from America, an island beyond their land," said Shea.

Cuchulainn acknowledged the introduction to Shea with a stately nod of courtesy. His eyes swept over Brodsky, and he ignored the outthrust hand. He addressed Shea. "Why do you travel in company with such a mountain of ugliness, dear?"

Out of the corner of his eye, Shea could see the cop's wattles swell dangerously. He said hastily; "He may be no beauty, but he's useful. He's our slave and bodyguard, a good fighting man. Shut up, Pete!"

Brodsky had sense enough to do so. Cuchulainn accepted the explanation with the same sad courtesy

and gestured toward the chariot. "You will be mounting up in the back of my car, and I will drive you to my camp, where there will be an eating before you set out on your journey again."

He climbed to the front of the chariot himself, while the three wanderers clambered wordlessly to the back seat and held on. Laeg, having disposed of the head bag, touched the horses with a golden goad. Off they went. Shea found the ride a monstrously rough one, for the vehicle had no springs and the road was distinguished by its absence, but Cuchulainn lounged in the seat, apparently at ease.

Presently there loomed ahead a small patch of woods at the bottom of a valley. Smoke rose from a fire. The sun had decided to resolve the question of what time of day it was by setting, so that the hollow lay in shadow. A score or more of men, rough and wild-looking, got to their feet and cheered as the chariot swept into the camp. At the center of it a huge iron pot bubbled over the fire, and in the background a shelter of poles, slabs of bark and branches had been erected. Laeg pulled up the chariot and lifted the head bag with its lumpish trophies, and there was more cheering.

Cuchulainn sprang down lightly, acknowledged the greeting with a casual wave, then swung to Shea. "Mac Shea, I am thinking that you are of quality, and as you are not altogether the ugliest couple in the world, you will be eating with me." He waved an arm. "Bring the food, darlings."

Cuchulainn's henchmen busied themselves, with a vast amount of shouting, and running about in patterns that would have made good cat's cradles. One picked up a stool and carried it across the clearing; a second immediately picked it up again and took it back to where it had been.

"Do you think they'll ever get around to feeding us?" said Belphebe in a low tone. But Cuchulainn merely looked on with a slight smile, seeming to regard the performance as somehow a compliment to himself.

After an interminable amount of coming and going, the stool was finally established in front of the lean-to. Cuchulainn sat down on it and with a wave of his hand, indicated that the Sheas were to sit on the ground in front of him. The charioteer Laeg joined them on the ground, which was still decidedly damp after the rain. But, as their clothes had not dried, it didn't seem to matter.

A man brought a large wooden platter on which were heaped the champion's victuals, consisting of a huge cut of boiled pork, a mass of bread, and a whole salmon. Cuchulainn laid it on his knees and set to work on it with fingers and his dagger, saying with a ghost of a smile, "Now according to the custom of Ireland, Mac Shea, you may challenge the champion for his portion. A man of your inches should be a blithe swordsman, and I have never fought with an American."

"Thanks," said Shea, "but I don't think I could eat that much, anyway, and there's a — what do you call it? — a geas against my fighting anyone who has done something for me, so I couldn't after the way you saved us." He addressed himself to the slab of bread on which had been placed a pork chop and a piece of salmon, then glanced at Belphebe and added, "Would it be too much trouble to ask for the loan of a pair of knives? We left in rather a hurry and without our tools."

A shadow flitted across the face of Cuchulainn. "It is not well for a man of his hands to be without his weapons. Are you sure, now, that they were not taken away from you?"

Belphebe said, "We came here on a magical spell, and as you doubtless know, there are some that cannot be spelled in the presence of cold iron."

"And what could be truer?" agreed Cuchulainn. He clapped his hands and called, "Bring two knives, darlings. The iron knives, not the bronze." He chewed, looking at Belphebe. "And where would you be journeying to, darlings?"

Shea said, "Back to America, I suppose. We sort of — dropped in to see the greatest hero in Ireland."

Cuchulainn appeared to take the compliment as a matter of course. "You come at a poor time. The expedition is over, and now I am going home to sit quietly with my wife Emer, so there will be no fighting."

Laeg looked up with his mouth full and said, "You will be quiet if Meddling Maev and Ailill will let you, Cucuc. Some devilment they will be getting up, or it is not the son of Riangabra I am."

"When my time comes to be killed by the Connachta, then I will be killed by the men of Connacht," said Cuchulainn, composedly. He was still looking at Belphebe.

Belphebe asked, "Who stands at the head of the magical art here?"

Cuchulainn said, "It is true that you said you have a taste for magic. None is greater, nor will be, than Ulster's Cathbadh, adviser to King Conchobar. And now you will come with me to Muirthemne in the morning, rest and fit yourselves, and we will go to Emain Macha to see him together."

He laid aside his platter and took another look at Belphebe. The little man was as good with a trencher as he was with a sling; there was practically nothing left, and he had had twice as much as Shea.

"That's extremely kind of you," said Shea. "Very



kind indeed." It was so very kind that he felt a twinge of suspicion.

"It is not," said Cuchulainn. "For those with the gift of beauty, it is no more than their due that they should receive all courtesy."

He was still looking at Belphebe, who glanced up at the darkening sky. "My lord," she said, "I am somewhat foredone. Would it not be well to seek our rest?"

Shea said, "It's an idea. Where do we sleep?"

Cuchulainn waved a hand toward the grove. "Where you will, darlings. No one will disturb you in the camp of Cuchulainn." He clapped his hands. "Gather moss for the bed of my friends."

When they were alone, Belphebe said in a low voice: "I like not the manner of his approach, though he has done us great good. Cannot you use your art to transport us back to Ohio?"

Shea said, "I'll take a chance on trying to work out the sorites in the morning. Remember, it won't do us any good to get back alone. We've got to take Pete, or we'll be up on a charge of kidnapping or murdering him, and I don't want to go prowling through this place at night looking for him. Besides, we need light to make the passes."

Early as they rose, the camp was already astir about them and a fire lighted. As Shea and Belphebe wandered through the camp, looking for Brodsky, they noted it was strangely silent, the elaborate confusion of the previous evening being carried on in whispers or dump show. Shea grabbed the arm of a bewhiskered desperado hurrying past with a bag of something to inquire the reason.

The man bent close and said in a fierce whisper, "Sure, 'tis that himself is in his sad mood, and keeping his booth. If you would lose your head, it would be just as well to make a noise."

"There's Pete," said Belphebe.

The detective waved a hand and came toward them from under the trees. He had somehow acquired one of the deerskin cloaks, which was held under his chin with a brass brooch, and he looked unexpectedly cheerful.

"What's the office?" he asked in the same stage whisper the others were using, as he approached them.

"Come with us," said Shea. "We're going to try to get back to Ohio. Where'd you get the new clothes?"

"Aw, one of these muzzlers thought he could wrestle, so I slipped him a little jujitsu and won it. Listen, Shea, I changed my mind. I ain't going back. This is the real McCoy."

"But we want to go back," said Belphebe, "and you told us just yesterday that if we showed up without you, our fate would be less than pleasant."

"Listen, give it a rest. I'm on the legit here, and with that magical stuff of yours, you could be, too. At least I want to stay for the big blow."

"Come this way," said Shea, leading away from the center of the camp to where there was less danger of their voices causing trouble. "What do you mean by the big blow?"

"From what I got," said Pete, "I figured out when we landed. This Maev and Ailill are rustling out the mob and heeling them up to give Cuchulainn a bang on the head. They got all the cousins of people he's bumped off in on the caper, and they're going to put a geas on him that will make him go up against them all at once, and then boom. I want to stay for the payoff."

"Look here," said Shea, "you said only yesterday that we had to get you back within a week. Remember? It was something about your probably being seen going into our house and not coming out."

"Sure, sure. And if we go back, I'll alibi you. But what for? I'm teaching these guys to wrestle, and what with your magic, maybe you could even take the geas off the big shot and he wouldn't get shoved over."

"Perhaps I could at that," said Shea. "It seems to amount to a kind of psychological compulsion by magical means, and between psychology and magic, I ought to make it. But no — it's too risky. I daren't take the chance with him making eyes at Belphebe."

They had emerged from the clump of trees and were at the edge of the slope, with the early sun just touching the tops of the branches above them. Shea went on, "I'm sorry, Pete, but Belphebe and I don't want to spend the rest of our lives here, and if we're going, we've got to go now. As you said. Now, you two hold hands. Give me your other hand, Belphebe."

Brodsky obeyed with a somewhat sullen expression. Shea closed his eyes, and began: "If either A or (B or C) is true, and C or D is false . . ." motioning with his free hand to the end of the sorites.

He opened his eyes again. They were still at the edge of a clump of trees, on a hill in Ireland, watching the smoke from the fire as it rose above the trees to catch the sunshine.

Belphebe asked, "What's amiss?"

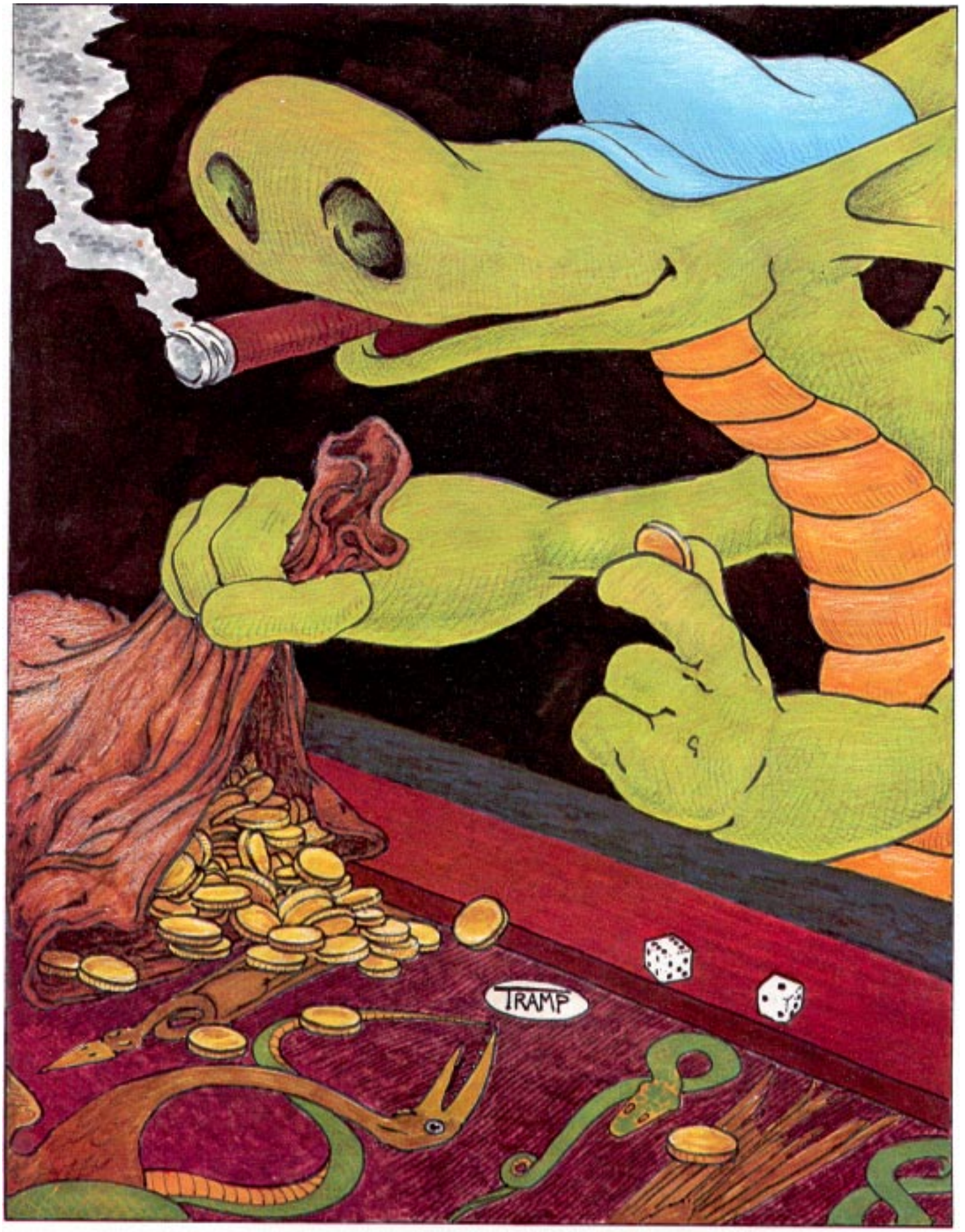
"I don't know," said Shea desperately. "If I only had something to write with, so I could check over

Finieous Fingers, Fred & Charly in: Grond Invents the Hamburger or . . . Chicken Little Strikes Again

by JD



Next: The Return of "Chicken Little



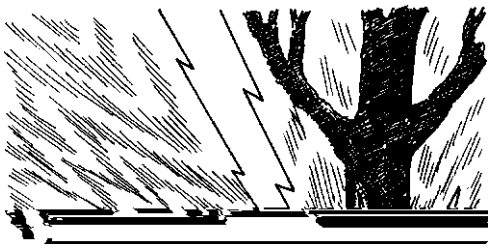
I've got my counters . . . What are you gonna use?

the steps . . . No, wait a minute. Making this work depends on a radical alteration of sense impressions in accordance with the rules of symbolic logic and magic. Now we know that magic works here, so that can't be the trouble. But for symbolic logic to be effective, you have to submit to its effects — that is, be willing. Pete, you're the villain of the piece. You don't want to go back."

"Don't put the squeeze on me," said Brodsky. "I'll play ball."

"All right. Now I want you to remember that you're going back to Ohio, and that you have a good job there and like it. Besides, you were sent out to find us, and you did. Okay?"

They joined hands again and Shea, constricting his brow with effort, ran through the sorites again, this time altering one or two of the terms to give greater energy. As he reached the end, time seemed to stand still for a second; then *crash!* and a flash of vivid blue lightning struck the tree nearest them, splitting it from top to bottom.



IV

Belphebe gave a little squeal, and a chorus of excited voices rose from the camp.

Shea gazed at the fragments of the splintered tree and said soberly, "I think that shot was meant for us, and that that just about tears it, darling. Pete, you get your wish. We're going to have to stay here at least until I know more about the laws controlling magic in this continuum."

Two or three of Cuchulainn's men burst excitedly through the trees and came toward them, spears ready. "Is it all right that you are?" one of them called.

"Just practicing a little magic," said Shea, easily. "Come on, let's go back and join the others."

In the clearing voices were no longer quenched, and the confusion had become worse than ever. Cuchulainn stood watching the loading of the chariot, with a lofty and detached air. As the three travelers approached he said, "Now it is to you I am grateful, Mac Shea, with your magical spell for reminding me that things are better done at home than abroad. It is leaving at once we are."

"Hey!" said Brodsky. "I ain't had no breakfast."

The hero regarded him with distaste. "You will be telling me that I should postpone the journey for the condition of a slave's belly?" he said, and turning to Shea and Belphebe, "We can eat as we go."

The ride was smoother than the one of the previous day only because the horses went at a walk so as not to outdistance the column of retainers on foot. Conversation over the squeaking of the wheels began by being sparse and rather boring, with Cuchulainn keeping his chin well down on his chest. But he apparently liked Belphebe's comments on the beauty of the landscape. As it came on to noon he began to chatter, addressing her with an exclusiveness that Shea found disturbing, though he had to admit that the little man talked well, and always with the most perfect courtesy.

The country around them got lower and flatter and flatter and lower, until from the tops of the few rises Shea glimpsed a sharp line of gray-blue across the horizon; the sea. A shower came down and temporarily soaked the column, but nobody paid it much attention, and in the clear sunlit air that followed everyone was soon dry. Cultivation became more common, though there was still less of it than pasturage. Occasionally a lumpish-looking serf, clad in a length of ragged sacking-like cloth wrapped around his middle and a thick veneer of dirt, left off his labors to stare at the band and wave a languid greeting.

At last, over the manes of the horses, Shea saw that they were approaching a stronghold. This consisted of a stockade of logs with a huge double gate.

Belphebe surveyed it critically and whispered behind her hand to Shea, "It could be taken with fire-arrows."

"I don't think they have many archers or very good ones," he whispered back. "Maybe you can show them something."

The gate was pushed open creakingly by more bearded warriors, who shouted: "Good-day to you, Cucuc! Good luck to Ulster's hound!"

The gate was wide enough to admit the chariot, scythe-blades and all. As the vehicle rumbled through the opening, Shea glimpsed houses of various shapes and sizes, some of them evidently stables and barns. The biggest of all was the hall in the middle, whose heavily thatched roof came down almost to the ground at the sides.

Laeg pulled up. Cuchulainn jumped down, waved his hand, and cried, "Muirthemne welcomes you, Americans!" All the others applauded as though he had said something particularly brilliant.

He turned to speak to a fat man, rather better dressed than the rest, when another man came out of the main hall and walked rapidly toward them. The newcomer was a thin man of medium height, elderly but vigorous, slightly bent and carrying a stick, on which he leaned now and again. He had a long white beard, and a purple robe covered him from neck to ankle.

"The best of the day to you, Cathbadh," said Cuchulainn. "This is surely a happy hour that brings you here, but where is my darling Emer?"

"Emer has gone to Emain Macha," said Cathbadh. "Conchobar summoned her . . ."

"Ara!" shouted Cuchulainn. "Is it a serf that I am, that the King can send for my wife every time he takes it into the head of him? He is . . ."

"It is not that at all, at all," said Cathbadh. "He summons you, too, and for that he sent me instead of Levarcham, for he knows you might not heed her word if you took it into that willful head of yours to disobey, whereas it is myself can put a geas on you to go."

"And why does himself want us at Emain Macha?"

"Would I be knowing all the secrete in the heart of a King?"

Shea asked, "Are you the court druid?"

Cathbadh became aware of him for the first time, and Cuchulainn made introductions. Shea explained, "It seems to me that the King might want you at the court for your own protection, so the druids can keep Maev's sorcerers from putting a spell on you. That's what she's going to do."

"How do you know of this?" asked Cathbadh.

"Through Pete here. He sometimes knows about things that are going to happen before they actually take place. In our country we call it second sight."

Cuchulainn wrinkled his nose. "That ugly slave?"

"Yeh, me," said Brodsky, who had approached the group. "And you better watch your step, handsome, because somebody's going to hang you up to dry unless you do something about it."

"If it is destined none can alter it," said Cuchulainn. "Fergus! Have the bath water heated." He turned to Shea. "Once you are properly washed and garbed you will look well enough for the board in my beautiful house. I will lend you some proper garments, for I cannot bear the sight of those Formorian-like rags."

III

Along the side of the main hall was an alcove made of screens of wattle, set at an angle that provided privacy for those within. In the alcove stood Cuchulainn's bathtub, a large and elaborate affair of bronze. A procession of the women of the manor were now coming in from the well with jugs of water, which they emptied into the tub. Meanwhile the men were poking up the fire at the end of the hall and adding a number of stones of about five to ten pounds' weight.

Brodsky sidled up to Shea, as they stood in the half-light, orienting themselves. "Listen, I don't want to blow the whistle on a bump rap, but you better watch it. The racket they have here, this guy can make a pass at Belphebe in his own house, and it's legit. You ain't got no beef coming."

"I was afraid of that," said Shea, unhappily. "Look there."

"There" was a row of wooden spikes projecting from one of the horizontal strings along the wall, and most of these spikes were occupied by human heads. As they watched Laeg brought in the head bag and added the latest trophies to the collection, pressing them down firmly. Some of those already in place were quite fresh, while others had been there so long that there was little left of them but a skull with a little hair adhering to the scalp.

"Jeepers!" said Brodsky, "and if you start beefing, he'll put you there, too. Give me time — I'll try to think of some way to rumble his line."

"Make way!" shouted a huge bewhiskered retainer. The three dodged as the man ran past them, carrying a large stone, smoking from the fire, in a pair of tongs. The man dashed into the alcove. There was a splash and a loud hiss. Another retainer followed with a second stone while the first was on his return trip. In a few minutes all the stones had been transferred to the bathtub. Shea looked around the screen and saw that the water was steaming gently.

Cuchulainn sauntered past into the bathroom and tested the water with an inquisitive finger. "That will do, dears."

The retainers picked the stones out of the water with their tongs and piled them in the corner, then went around from behind the screen. Cuchulainn reached up to pull off his tunic, then saw Shea.

"I am going to undress for the bath," he said. "Surely, you would not be wanting to remain here, now."

Shea turned back into the main room just in time to see Brodsky smack one fist into the other palm. "Got it!"

"Got what?" said Shea.

"How to needle his hot tomato." He looked around, then pulled Shea and Belphebe closer. "Listen, the big shot putting the scram on you now just reminded me. The minute he makes a serious pass at you, Belle, you gotta go into a strip-tease act. In public, where everybody can get a gander at it."

Belphebe gasped. Shea asked, "Are you out of your head? That sounds to me like trying to put a fire out with gasoline."

"I tell you he can't take it!" Brodsky's voice was low but urgent. "They can't none of them. One time when this guy was going to put the slug on everyone at the court, the King sent out a bunch of babes with bare knockers, and they nearly had to pick him up in a basket."

"I like this not," said Belphebe, but Shea said, "A nudity taboo! That could be part of a culture pattern, all right. Do they all have it?"

"Yeh, and but good," said Brodsky. "They even croak of it. What gave me the tip was him putting the chill on you before he started to undress — he was doing you a favor."

Cuchulainn stepped out of the alcove, buckling a belt around a fresh tunic, emerald-green with embroidery of golden thread. He scrubbed his long hair with a towel and ran a comb through it, while Laeg took his place behind the screen.

Belphebe said, "Is there to be but one water for all?"

Cuchulainn said, "There is plenty of soapwort. Cleanliness is good for beauty." He glanced at Brodsky. "The slave can bathe in the trough outside."

"Listen . ." began Brodsky, but Shea put a hand on his arm, and to cover up, asked, "Do your druids use spells of transportation — from one place to another?"

"There is little a good druid cannot do — but I would advise you not to use the spells of Cathbadh unless you are a hero as well as a maker of magic, for they arc very mighty."

He turned to watch the preparations for dinner with a sombre satisfaction. Laeg presently appeared, his toilet made, and from another direction one of the women brought garments which she took into the bathroom for Shea and Belphebe. Shea started to follow his wife, but remembered what Brodsky had said about the taboo, and decided not to take a chance on shocking his hosts. She came out soon enough in a floor-length gown that clung to her all over, and he noted with displeasure that it was the same green and embroidered pattern as Cuchulainn's tunic.

After Shea had dealt with water almost cold and a towel already damp, his own costume turned out to be a saffron tunic and tight knitted scarlet trews which he imagined as looking quite effective.

Belphebe was watching the women around the fire. Over in the shadows under the eaves sat Pete Brodsky, cleaning his fingernails with a bronze knife, a chunky, middle-aged man — a good hand in a fight, with his knowledge of jujitsu and his quick reflexes, and not a bad companion. Things would be a lot easier, though, if he hadn't fouled up the spell by wanting to stay where he was, Or had that been responsible?

Old Cathbadh came stumping up with his stick. "Mac Shea," he said, "the Little Hound is after telling me that you also are a druid, who came here by magical arts from a distant place, and can summon lightning from the skies."

"It's true enough," said Shea. "Doubtless you know those spells."

"Doubtless I do," said Cathbadh, looking sly., "We must hold converse on matters of our craft. We will be teaching each other some new spells, I am thinking."

Shea frowned. The only spell he was really interested in was one that would take Belphebe and himself — and Pete — back to Garaden, Ohio, and Cathbadh probably didn't know that one. It would be a question of getting at the basic assumptions, and more or less working out his own method of putting them to use.

Aloud he said, "I think we can be quite useful to each other. In America, where I come from, we have worked out some of the general principles of magic, so that it is only necessary to learn the procedures in various places."

Cathbadh shook his head. "You do be telling me — and it is the word of a druid, so I must believe you — but 'tis hard to credit that a druid could travel among the Scythians of Greece or the Scots of Egypt, with all the strange gods they do be having, and still be protected by his spells as well as at home."

Shea got a picture of violently confused geography. But then, he reflected, the correspondence between this world and his own would only be rough, anyway. There might be Scots in Egypt here.

Just then Cuchulainn came out of his private room and sat down without ceremony at the head of the table. The others gathered round. Laeg took the place at one side of the hero and Cathbadh at the other. Shea and Belphebe were nodded to the next places, opposite each other. A good-looking serf woman with hair bound back from her forehead filled a large golden goblet at Cuchulainn's place with wine from a golden ewer, then smaller silver cups at the places of Laeg and Cathbadh, and copper mugs for Shea and Belphebe. Down the table the rest of the company had leather jacks and barley beer.

Cuchulainn said to Cathbadh, "Will you make the sacrifice, dear?"

The druid stood up, spilled a few drops on the floor and chanted to the gods Bile, Danu, and Ler. Shea decided that it was only imagination that he was hearing the sound of beating wings, and only the approach of the meal that gave him a powerful sense of internal comfort, but there was no doubt that Cathbadh knew his stuff.

He knew it, too. "Was that not fine, now?" he said, as he sat down next to Shea. "Can you show me anything in your outland magic ever so good?"

Shea thought. It wouldn't do any harm to give the old codger a small piece of sympathetic magic, and might help his own reputation. He said, "Move your wine-cup over next to mine, and watch it carefully."

There would have to be a spell to link the two if he were going to make Cathbadh's wine disappear as he drank his own, and the only one he could think of at the moment was the "Double, double" from "Macbeth." He murmured that under his breath, making the hand passes he had learned in Faerie.

Then he said, "Now, watch," picked up his mug and set it to his lips.

Whoosh!



Out of Cathbadh's cup a geyser of wine leaped as though driven by a pressure hose, nearly reaching the ceiling before it broke up to descend in a rain of glittering drops, while the guests at the head of the table leaped to their feet to draw back from the phenomenon. Cathbadh was a fast worker; he lifted his stick and struck the hurrying stream of liquid, crying something unintelligible in a high voice. Abruptly the gusher was quenched and there was only the table, swimming with wine, and serf women rushing to mop up the mess.

Cuchulainn said, "This is a very beautiful piece of magic, Mac Shea, and it is a pleasure to have so notable a druid among us. But you would not be making fun of us, would you?" He looked dangerous.

"Not me," said Shea. "I only. . ."

Whatever he intended to say was cut off by a sudden burst of unearthly howling from somewhere outside. Shea glanced around rather wildly, feeling that things were getting out of hand. Cuchulainn said, "You need not be minding that at all, now. It will only be Uath, and because the moon has reached her term."

"I don't understand," said Shea.

"The women of Ulster were not good enough for Uath, so he must be going to Connacht and courting the daughter of Ollgaeth the druid. This Ollgaeth is no very polite man; he said no Ultonian should have his daughter, and when Uath persisted, he put a geas on Uath that when the moon fills he must howl the night out, and a geas on his own daughter that she cannot abide the sound of howling. I am thinking that Ollgaeth's head is due for a place of honor." He looked significantly at his collection.

Shea said, "But I still don't understand. If you can put a geas on someone, can't it be taken off again?"

Cuchulainn looked mournful, Cathbadh embarrassed, and Laeg laughed. "Now you will be making Cathbadh sad, and our dear Cucuc is too polite to tell you, but the fact is no other than that Ollgaeth is so good a druid that no one can lift the spells he lays, nor lay one he cannot lift."

Outside, Uath's mournful howl rose again. Cuchulainn said to Belphebe, "Does he trouble you, dear? I can have him removed, or the upper part of him."

As the meal progressed, Shea noticed that Cuchulainn was putting away an astonishing quantity of the wine, talking almost exclusively with Belphebe, although the drink did not seem to have much effect on the hero but to intensify his sombre courtesy. But, when the table was cleared, he lifted his goblet to drain it, looked at Belphebe from across the table, and nodded significantly.

Shea got up and ran around the table to place a hand on her shoulder. Out of the corner of his eye, he saw Pete Brodsky getting up, too. Cuchulainn's face bore the faintest of smiles. "It is sorry to discommode you I am," he said, "but this is by the rules and not even a challenging matter. So now, Belphebe, darling, you will just come to my room."

He got up and started toward Belphebe, who got up, too, backing away. Shea tried to keep between them and racked his brain hopelessly for some kind of spell that might stop this business. Everyone else was standing up and pushing to watch the little drama.

Cuchulainn said, "Now you would not be getting in my way, would you, Mac Shea, darling?" His voice was gentle, but there was something incredibly ferocious in the way he uttered the words, and Shea suddenly realized he was facing a man who had a sword. Outside, Uath howled mournfully.

Beside him, Belphebe herself suddenly leaped for one of the weapons hanging on the wall and tugged, but in vain. It had been so securely fastened with staples that it would have taken a pry bar to get it loose. Cuchulainn laughed.

Behind and to the left of Shea, Brodsky's voice rose, "Belle, you stiff, do like I told you!"

She turned back as Cuchulainn drew nearer and with set face crossed her arms and whipped the green

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gown off over her head. She stood in her underwear.

There was a simultaneous gasp and groan of horror from the audience. Cuchulainn stopped, his mouth coming open.

"Go on!" yelled Brodsky in the background. "Give it the business!"

Belphebe reached behind her to unhook her brassiere. Cuchulainn staggered as though he had been struck. He threw one arm across his eyes, reached the table and brought his face down on it, pounding the wood with the other fist.

"Ara!" he shouted. "Take her away! Is it killing me you will be and in my own hall, and me your host that has saved your life?"

"Will you let her alone?" asked Shea.

"I will that for the night."

"Mac Shea, take his offer," advised Laeg from the head of the table. He looked rather greenish himself. "If his rage comes on him, none of us will be safe."

Okay. Honest," said Shea and held Belphebe's dress for her.

There was a universal sigh of relief from the background. Cuchulainn staggered to his feet. It is not feeling well that I am, darlings," he said and, picking up the golden ewer of wine, made for his room.

IV

There was a good deal of excited gabble among the retainers as Belphebe walked back to her place without looking to right or left, but they made room for Shea and Brodsky to join her. The druid looked shrewdly at the closed door and said, "If the Little Hound drinks too much by himself, he may be brooding on the wrong you are after doing him, and a sad day that would be. If he comes out with the hero-light playing round his head, run for your lives."

Belphebe said, "But where would we go."

"Back to your own place. Where else?"

Shea frowned. "I'm not sure. . ." he began, when Brodsky cut in suddenly, "Say," he said, "your boss ain't really got no right to get bugged up. We had to play it that way?"

Cathbadh swung to him. "And why, serf?"

"Don't call me serf. She's got a fierce geas on her. Any guy that touches her gets a bellyache and dies of it. Her husband only stands it because he's a magician. It's lucky we put the brakes on before the boss got her in that room, or he'd be ready for the lilies right now."

Cathbadh's eyebrows shot up like a seagull taking off. "Himself should know of this," he said. "There would be less blood shed in Ireland if more people opened their mouths to explain things before they put their feet in them."

He got up, went to the bedroom door and knocked. There was a growl from within, Cathbadh entered, and a few minutes later came out with Cuchulainn. The later's step was visibly unsteady, and his melancholy seemed to have deepened. He walked to the head of the table and sat down in the chair again.

"Sure, and this is the saddest tale in the world I'm hearing about your wife having such a bad geas on her. The evening is spoilt and all.. I hope the black fit does not come on me, for then it will be blood and death I need to restore me."

There were a couple of gasps audible and Laeg looked alarmed, but Cathbadh said hastily, "The evening is not so spoilt as you think Cucuc. This Mac Shea is evidently a very notable druid and spell maker, but I think I am a better. Did you notice how quickly I put down his wine fountain? Would it not lift your heart, now, to see the two of us engage in a contest of magic?"

Cuchulainn clapped his hands. "Never was truer word spoken. You will just do that, darlings."

Shea said, "I'm afraid I can't guarantee . . ." but Belphebe plucked his sleeve and with her head close to his, whispered, " Do it. There is a danger here."

"It isn't working right," Shea whispered back.

Outside rose the mournful sound of Uath's howling. "Can you not use your psychology on him out there?" the girl asked. "It will be magic to them."

"A real psychoanalysis would take days," said Shea. "Wait a minute, though — we seem to be in a world where the hysteric type is the norm. That means a high suggestibility, and we might get something out of post-hypnotic suggestion."

Cuchulainn from the head of the table said, "It is not all night we have to wait."

Shea turned round and said aloud, "How would it be if I took the geas off that character out there training to be a bar-room tenor? I understand that's something Cathbadh hasn't been able to do."

Cathbadh said, "If you can do this, it will be a thing worth seeing, but I will not acknowledge you can do it until I have seen it."

"All right," said Shea. "Bring him in."

"Laeg, dear, go get us Uath," said Cuchulainn. He took a drink, looked at Belphebe and his expression became morose again.

Shea said, "Let's see. I want a small bright object. May I borrow one of your rings, Cuchulainn? That one with the big stone would do nicely."

Cuchulainn slid the ring down the table as Laeg returned, firmly gripping the arm of a stocky young man, who seemed to be opposing some resistance to the process. Just as they got in the door Uath flung back his head and emitted a blood-curdling howl. Laeg dragged him forward, howling away.

Shea turned to the others. "Now if this magic is going to work, I'll need a little room. Don't come too near us while I'm spinning the spell, or you'll be apt to get caught in it, too." He arranged a pair of seats well back from the table and attached a thread to the ring.

Laeg pushed Uath into one of the seats. "That's a bad geas you have there, Uath," said Shea, "and I want you to cooperate with me in getting rid of it. You'll do everything I tell you, won't you?"

The man nodded. Shea lifted the ring, said, "Watch this," and began twirling the thread back and forth between thumb and forefinger, so that the ring rotated first one way and then the other, sending out a flickering gleam of reflection from the rushlights. Meanwhile Shea talked to Uath in a low voice, saying "sleep" now and then in the process. Behind him he could hear an occasionally caught breath and could almost feel the atmosphere of suspense.

Uath went rigid.

Shea asked in a low voice, "Can you hear me, Uath?"

"That I can."

"You will do what I say."

"That I will."

"When you wake up, you won't suffer from this howling geas any more."

"That I will not."

"To prove that you mean it, the first thing you do on waking will be to clap Laeg on the shoulder."

"That I will."

Shea repeated his directions several times, varying the words, and making Uath repeat them after him. There was no use taking a chance on slipups. At least he brought him out of the hypnotic trance with a snap of the fingers and a sharp "Wake up!"

Uath stared about him with an air of bewilderment. Then he got up, walked over to the table and clapped Laeg on the shoulder. There was an appreciative murmur from the audience.

Shea asked, "How do you feel, Uath?"

"It is just fine that I am feeling. I do not want to be howling at the moon at all now, and I'm thinking the geas is gone for good. I thank your honor." He came down the table, seized Shea's hand and kissed it and joined the other retainers at the lower part of the table.

Cathbadh said, "That is a very good magic, indeed, and not the least of it was the small geas you put on him to lay his hand on Laeg's shoulder at the same time. And true it is that I have been unable to lift this geas. But as one man can run faster, so can another one climb faster, and I will demonstrate by taking the geas off your wife, which you have evidently not been able to deal with."

"I'm not sure. . ." began Shea, doubtfully.

"Let not yourself be worried," said Cuchulainn. "It will not harm her at all, and in the future she can be more courteous in the high houses she visits."

The druid rose and pointed a long, bony finger at Belphebe. He chanted some sort of rhythmic affair which began in a gibberish of unknown language, but became more and more intelligible, ending with: " . . . and by oak, ash and yew, by the beauty of Aengus and the strength of Ler and by authority as high druid of Ulstr, let this geas be lifted from you, Belphebe! Let it pass! Out with it! It is erased, cancelled and no more to be heard of!" He tossed up his arms and then sat down. "How do you feel, darling?"

"In good sooth, not much different than before," said Belphebe. "Should I?"

Cuchulainn said, 'But how can we know now that the spell has worked? Aha! I have it! Come with me." He rose and came round the table, and in response to Shea's exclamation of fury and Belphebe's of dismay, added, "Only as far as the door. Have I not given you my word?"

He bent over Belphebe, put one arm around her and reached for her hand, then reeled back, clutching his stomach with both hands and gasping for breath. Cathbadh and Laeg were on their feet. So was Shea.

Cuchulainn staggered against Laeg's arm, wiped a sleeve cross his eyes and said, "Now the American is the winner, since your removal spell has failed, and it was like to be the death of me that the touch of her was. Do you be trying it yourself, Cathbadh, dear."

The druid reached out and laid a cautious finger on Belphebe's arm. Nothing happened.

Laeg said, "Did not the serf say that a magician was proof against this geas?"

Cathbadh said, "You may have the right of it there, although, but I am thinking myself there is another reason. Cucuc wished to take her to his bed, while I was not thinking of that at all, at all."

Cuchulainn sat down again and addressed Shea. "A good thing it is, indeed, that I was protected from the work of this geas. Has it not proved obstinate even to the druids of your own country?"

"Very," said Shea. "I wish I could find someone who could deal with it. "He had been more surprised than Cuchulainn by the latter's attack of cramps, but in the interval he had figured it out. Belphebe hadn't had any geas on her in the first place. Therefore, when Cathbadh threw at her a spell designed to lift a geas, it took the opposite effect of laying on her a very good geas indeed. That was elementary magicology, and under the conditions he was rather grateful to Cathbadh.

Cathbadh said, "In America there may be none to deal with such a matter, but in Ireland there is a man both bold and clever enough to lift the spell."

"Who's he?" asked Shea.

"That will be Ollgaeth of Cruachan, at the Court of Ailill and Maev, who put the geas on Uath."

Brodsky, from beside Shea spoke up. "He's the guy that's going to put one on Cuchulainn before the big mob takes him."

"Wurra!" said Cathbadh to Shea. "Your slave must have a second mind to go with his second sight. The last time he spoke, it would only be a spell that Ollgaeth would be putting on the Little Hound."

"Listen, punk," said Brodsky in a tone of exas-

peration, "get the stones out of your head. This is the pitch: this Maev and Ailill are mobbing up everybody that owes Cuchulainn here a score, and when they get them all together, they're going to put a geas on him that will make him fight them all at once, and it's too bad."

Cathbadh combed his beard with his fingers. "If this be true. . ." he began.

"It's the McCoy. Think I'm on the con?"

"I was going to say that if it be true, it is high tidings from a low source. Nor do I see precisely how it may be dealt with. If it were a matter of spells only . . ."

Cuchulainn said with mournful and slightly alcoholic gravity, "I would fight them all without the geas, but if I am fated to fall, then that is an end of me."

Cathbadh turned to Shea. "You see the trouble we have with himself. Does your second sight reach farther, slave?"

Brodsky said, "Okay, lug, you asked for it. After Cuchulainn gets rubbed out, there'll be a war and practically everybody in the act gets knocked off, including you and Ailill and Maev. How do you like it?"

"As little as I like the look of your face," said Cathbadh. He addressed Shea. "Can this foretelling be trusted?"

"I've never known him to be wrong."

Cathbadh glanced from one to the other till one could almost hear his brains rumbling. Then he said, "I am thinking, Mac Shea, that you will be having business at Ailill's court."

"What gives you such an idea?"

"You will be wanting to see Ollgaeth in this matter of your wife's geas, of course. A wife with a geas like that is like one with a bad eye, and you can never be happy until it is removed entirely. You will take your man with you, and he will tell his tale and let Maev know that we know of her schemings, and they will be no more use than trying to feed a boar on bracelets."

Brodsky snapped his fingers and said, "Take him up," in a heavy whisper, but Shea said, "Look here, I'm not at all sure that I want to go to Ailill's court. Why should I? And if this Maev is as determined as she seems to be, I don't think you'll stop her by telling her you know what she's up to."

"On the first point," said the druid, "there is the matter that Cucuc saved your life and all, and you would be grateful to him, not to mention the geas. And for the second, it is not so much Maev that I would be letting know we see through her planning as Ollgaeth. For he will know as well as yourself, that if we learn of the geas before he lays it, all the druids at Conchobar's court will chant against him, and he will have no more chance of making it bite than a dog does of eating an apple."

"Mmm," said Shea. "Your point about gratitude is a good one, even if I can't quite see the validity of the other. What we want mostly is to get to our own home, though." He stifled a yawn. "We can take a night to sleep on it and decide in the morning. Where do we sleep?"

"Finn will show you to a chamber," said Cuchulainn. "Myself and Cathbadh will be staying up the while to discuss on this matter of Maev." He smiled his charming and melancholy smile.



Finn guided the couple to a guest-room at the back of the building, handed Shea a rush-light and closed the door, as Belphebe put up her arms to be kissed.

The next second Shea was doubled up and knocked flat to the floor by a super-edition of the cramps.

Belphebe bent over him. "Are you hurt, Harold?" she asked.

He pulled himself to a sitting posture with his back against the wall. "Not — seriously," he gasped. "It's that geas. It doesn't take any time out for husbands."

The girl considered. "Could you not relieve me of it as you did the one who howled?"

Shea said, "I can try, but I can pretty well tell in advance that it won't work. Your personality is too tightly integrated — just the opposite of these hysterics around here. That is, I wouldn't stand a chance of hypnotizing you."

"You might do it by magic."

Shea scrambled the rest of the way to his feet. "Not till I know more. Haven't you noticed I've been getting an over-charge — first that stroke of lightning and then the wine fountain? There's something in this continuum that seems to reverse my kind of magic."

She laughed a little. "If that's the law, why there's an end. You have but to summon Pete and make a magic that would call for us to stay here, then hey, presto! we are returned."

"I don't dare take the chance, darling. It might work and it might not — and even if it did, you'd be apt to wind up in Ohio with that geas still on you, and we really would be in trouble. We do take our characteristics along with us when we make the jump. And anyway, I don't know how to get back to Ohio yet."

"What's to be done, then?" the girl said. "For surely you have a plan, as always."

"I think the only thing we can do is take up Cathbadh's scheme and go see this Ollgaeth. At least, he ought to be able to get rid of that geas."

All the same, Shea had to sleep on the floor.

To be concluded in Vol. III No. 2 #16

Random Encounters for BOOT HILL

by Michael E. Crane

Have you ever wanted to play *Boot Hill* but didn't have a moderator? Or have you, as the moderator, ever wanted to lighten your burden? Or have you ever finished an adventure early and just wanted to kill some time? The answer is to have a random encounter chart. This almost totally eliminates the need for a moderator and relieves all the demands of role-playing, for the most part, on the players. For an example, I have made up a wilderness encounter chart; encounter charts could be made up of cities or rural areas.

For each day in the wilderness, roll a six-sided die. A roll of six indicates an encounter. If an encounter is indicated, roll percentile dice and consult the table below:

Wilderness Encounter Table (WET)

Roll	Encounter
1-10	2-12 mounted bandits, armed with an assortment of revolvers and rifles. There is a 15% chance of $l-6,000. Otherwise there will be $1-10 per bandit.
11-40	2-12 wagons containing 1-4 homesteaders apiece. There is also a 50% chance of cows (1-12) and a 25% chance of pigs (1-6). The wagons are usually loaded with foodstuffs, clothing, furniture, etc. . . . 10-60% of the homesteaders are armed (rifles) and know how to use them. The homesteaders that are armed have a 50% chance of having $1-10 apiece.
41-45	1-3 clergy-unarmed-20% chance of having $1-20 in gold.
46-65	Soldiers-75% chance of a detachment (7-12 + Leader) and a 25% chance of a Troop (42-52 incl. Leaders and scouts) soldiers. Soldiers are mounted, and are armed with SAR's and Standard Army Issue rifles. Each soldier has $2-40.
66-75	Indians-1-40. 95% are mounted. All Indians are armed with Tomahawks and/or knives, 40% are armed with bows, 20% are armed with lances, 20% with Civil War rifles, 10% with standard rifles, and 10% with revolvers.
76-80	Pony Express Rider-Has $1-20 and is armed with a DAR and a standard rifle. There is a 75% chance that he has a good horse and a 25% chance he has an excellent horse.
81-85	Trapper-Armed with DAR, Buffalo Rifle, Throwing Knife and Axe. A trapper has 1-3 horses (75%) or 1-3 donkeys (25%). There is a 50% chance that he has $1-20.
86-90	Posse consisting of 3-18 men armed with DAR's and standard rifles. Posses are mounted.
91-85	Stagecoach-Has a guard, driver and 1-6 passengers. Guard is armed with DAR and standard rifle. 1-4 passengers are armed (30% chance CBR, 20% chance SAR, 10% chance DAR and 40% chance standard rifle). There is a 50% chance that each passenger has $1-20.
96-100	Packet Train-1-10 wagons-l driver per wagon-armed with SAR and shotgun. Cargo is determined by moderator-is usually foodstuffs. Each driver has a 20% chance of having $1-10.

As you can see, this chart contains many possible variations with the possibilities being endless. After using this type chart for a while you will find that the most enjoyable adventures can come through it.

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